



GROWING UP IN THE ILLAWARRA

Winifred Mitchell
Geoffrey Sherington



**GROWING UP
IN THE
ILLAWARRA**



GROWING UP IN THE ILLAWARRA:
A SOCIAL HISTORY 1834 – 1984

WOLLONGONG
1984

Winifred Mitchell and Geoffrey Sherington 1984

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PREFACE

This is a social history of an Australian region. Its theme is the changing experiences of children growing up. The history of the Illawarra region of New South Wales captures many of the developments and fluctuations of Australian social life over the past two centuries. From the displacement of the original aboriginal inhabitants of the early twentieth century through the rural and mining settlements of colonial Australia to the industrial development and changing composition of the population in the twentieth century, living in Illawarra has generally been a microcosm of the wider world of being an Australian. In particular, much of the focus of the white settlers of the past one hundred and fifty years has been on 'growth' and preparing what they thought was a better world for their children. By looking at the lives of children and their families in the 'everyday' and other circumstances we can discover as much, if not more, about social and other relationships than by examining more public institutions such as parliament or trade unions, all of which are dominated by adults.

It is not always easy to find out about families, children and 'everyday life' in the past. For the nineteenth century we have relied on traditional documentary sources such as newspapers, diaries, published accounts of observers and the archives of such public institutions as schools. We have also used, where appropriate, the census and the records of the Registrar-General's Department for figures on marriages and births. For the twentieth century we have drawn on the personal memories of many who grew up in the Illawarra region, and who were prepared to share their experiences with us. By using oral history it was possible to get behind the general figures, on such matters as school attendance and housing growth and to understand what it was like to be young in the previous age.

The book is organised into five chapters. We look first of all at the arrival of European settlers, their impact on the aboriginal tribes of the area, and the general pattern of growth in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the next two chapters we have chosen contrasting environments for growing up in nineteenth century Illawarra, looking closely at family life and schooling in the rural settlement of mid to late nineteenth century Kiama and the mining village of Bulli. In our third chapter we consider the slow transformation of the region into the industrial heartland of New South Wales and the consequences that this had in many ways for children growing up in the period from the turn of the century to the beginning of the Second World War. In our final chapter we examine some of the multiplicity of changes that have overwhelmed the region since 1945, particularly the arrival of new waves of overseas immigrants who have brought new traditions and expectations for the young.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------|
| Preface | (i) | |
| Acknowledgements | (ii) | |
| Chapter 1 | Beginnings | 1 |
| | tribal families; the convicts; the land owner; church and school | |
| | Illustrations (pp 8 - 12) | |
| Chapter 2 | Nineteenth Century Illawarra | 22 |
| | Life In A Rural Community | |
| | farming families; bringing up respectable children; continuing family traditions | |
| | Illustrations (pp 29 - 32) | |
| Chapter 3 | Nineteenth Century Illawarra | 42 |
| | Life In A Mining Village | |
| | the mining family; the education of miners; survival of the family | |
| | Illustrations (pp 49 - 52) | |
| Chapter 4 | Twentieth Century Illawarra | 64 |
| | Before The War | |
| | the coming of industry; life at home; universal schooling; | |
| | play, work and the Sabbath day | |
| | Illustrations (pp 77 - 84) | |
| Chapter 5 | Twentieth Century Illawarra | 98 |
| | After The War | |
| | the new population; housing and suburban expansion; growing schools; | |
| | training the young; leisure | |
| | Illustrations (pp 113 - 120) | |
| Abbreviations in End Notes | | 133 |
| End Notes -- Chapter 1 | | 134 |
| Chapter 2 | | 138 |
| Chapter 3 | | 141 |
| Chapter 4 | | 143 |
| Chapter 5 | | 148 |
| Index | | 161 |



CHAPTER 1

NINETEENTH CENTURY ILLAWARRA

BEGINNINGS

TRIBAL FAMILIES

For more than 20,000 years before the arrival of white settlers in Illawarra, the region was the home of several aboriginal tribes¹. While Captain Cook was sailing close to Australia's eastern coastline late in April 1770 he had his first sight of the native inhabitants. With a small party from the *Endeavour* Cook tried to make a landing on the coast near what is now Bellambi; as the boat approached the beach, two natives were seen and a hut and two small boats, ill-made as Cook observed. The natives went into the bush having had their first glimpse of English people. Prevented from landing by the heavy surf, Cook and his companions returned to the *Endeavour*; the ship continued north to Botany Bay where Cook claimed the whole land for George III and England.

At Botany Bay more of the native inhabitants were encountered². There were two tribes of aborigines living in the Sydney area and another six tribes on the coastal area south of Sydney down to Cape Howe; there were four other tribes on the southern tablelands. The two natives Cook observed on the Illawarra coast could have been members of the Wodi Wodi tribe or of the Turrawal or even of the Wandians from the Shoalhaven River area. For though the tribes had their own particular boundaries there were occasions for visits into the regions of others. Important as tribal and group divisions were to the aboriginal economy and culture, there was a factor cutting across geographical boundaries; this was language. All the tribes on the south coast from Botany Bay to Jervis Bay spoke Dharawal³. The native inhabitants were hunter gatherers, wandering purposefully seeking food. There was an abundance of fish in the rivers, lakes, lagoons and the sea, there were shellfish, prawns and large crustaceans in Lake Illawarra as well as around the rocky sea shores. Wild fowl too could be caught on the lake; in the bush were wallabies, possums, bandicoots and other small animals and reptiles, as well as a large variety of plants supplying edible fruits, leaves, flowers, nuts and roots.

In a life style which was in complete accord with the natural environment, the men hunted and fished with spears and other weapons. The women gathered the vegetables and fruits and shellfish; they caught fish too, with a line and shell hook. The climate was mild but when shelter was needed there were caves and overhanging rocks; or huts could be built with sheets of bark propped up with sticks like the one Cook observed. If the ground was damp the women could strip the papery bark from the melaleuca,

the ti-tree. Possums supplied furs for clothing and bedding. When boats were needed for fishing they could be made quickly from sheets of bark, bound at the ends with the tough vines from the dense bush; the boats were discarded when the group moved on. Since the men had to carry their spears and the women the babies as well as any baskets or pots needed for the next stopping place, nothing was carried that was not essential to survival. Thus many things were indeed make shift or "ill-made". On the other hand, tools regularly used were quite complex: axes and other implements, sharpened or pointed, some tipped with bone, were made with care and skill.

Each tribe was divided into groups and had its own area on which it could hunt fish and gather food. But the aborigines from the whole Illawarra area and beyond came often to the shores of Lake Illawarra where there was an ample supply of fish and wild fowl to support large assemblies gathered for ceremonies.⁴ The habits of the aboriginal people round Sydney and in the Hunter River area to the north were observed and described by a number of English writers, who, however interested and anxious to understand, could not grasp the full significance of the aboriginal economy and social organization. Unable to discern any religious customs or systems of law, they dismissed the indigenes as 'pagans' and 'savages'. They did not see the paintings, drawings and carvings in the caves and on rocks which symbolised the essential unity between man and nature and the 'Dreamtime'. They were not aware of the myths and rituals reflected in the daily practice and in the close attachment of aboriginal groups to their tribal lands and sacred sites. For the newcomers land was the basis of private property, to be cultivated and used in the accumulation of individual wealth. There were no such concepts in the aboriginal traditions.⁵

The Illawarra blacks lived undisturbed after Cook's departure and even for a short period after the white invaders came to stay in 1788. This was in sharp contrast to the shattering impact on the tribes in the Sydney region of the establishing of the penal settlement at Botany Bay, the effects there were both immediate and long term.⁶ It was not until 1796 that Matthew Flinders and George Bass came in the *Beagle Tom Thumb* to explore the land of the Five Islands and Red Point which Cook had only seen from his ship. At Red Point they met two aborigines from Botany Bay who guided them to fresh water. On the shores of Lake Illawarra they encountered some of the local natives and with the cooperation of the Botany Bay pair there ensued that odd incident in diplomacy when Bass cut the hair and beards of a dozen blacks; in return the blacks tried to give the whites information about the area which they called "Alouns". Bass made another expedition, this time further south, at the end of the following year, when he observed Kiama's Blowhole and discovered the Shoalhaven river; on this occasion he did not meet any of the local natives though they probably knew of his presence.⁷

Between these two official excursions there were a number of accidental meetings of black and white caused by ships being wrecked on Australia's eastern coast. One of these ships, the *Sydney Cove*, which came from Bengal in November 1796 with a cargo of spirits intended for profitable sale in the New South Wales settlement, came to grief on an island in the Furneaux group in Bass Strait, seventeen of the ship's company then started off in the long boat which too met disaster near Point Hicks. The seventeen then commenced the arduous walk northwards to Botany Bay during which, as Mr. Clark, supercargo of the *Sydney Cove* reported later, they met with natives who 'were frequently very kind' but in some cases 'were extremely savage'. Only three of the shipwrecked party survived the journey, Mr. Clark and the two remaining crewmen being picked up at Wattamolla, south of Botany Bay, by a fishing boat. The first mate and the ship's carpenter had been with Clark and his companions until the day before but could go no further because of their 'excessive fatigue'. A rescue party later could find only 'a few trifling articles which were known to have been in their possession', and as these were

bloodstained it was assumed that the Illawarra natives had killed the two. Clark made a significant comment about the

monos unfeeling disposition of the carpenter who often when some friendly native had presented him with a few fish growled that they had not given him all and insisted that because they were blackfellows it would be right to take it by force. By some illiberal and intemperate act of this nature there was too much reason to believe he had brought on himself and his ill-fated companion, the mate, a men cast in a gentler mould, a painful and premature death.⁸

It is possible that there had been similar circumstances contributing to the deaths of those who had earlier dropped behind through exhaustion.

There were other cases where shipwrecked people walked along the beach and managed to reach Sydney safely, aided by natives who gave food. Bird collectors too brought away specimens from Five Islands and the Shoalhaven without any interference. In the latter case it was known by 1806 that there were numerous black inhabitants.

The descriptions of the southern region, made known by the authorised and the chance observers, aroused the interest of a new group of intruders into the aboriginal environment, those seeking wealth from the cedar trees. Trade in cedar had already begun with the timber north of Botany Bay, in the Hunter River area. Cedar was reported to be growing plentifully on the banks of the Shoalhaven and on the slopes of the mountain range extending through the Illawarra region. Before any white settlement occurred in the south, cedar cutters were at work, felling the trees, sawing them into logs and planks ready for hauling to the shore for shipment to Sydney. When land grants began to be made after 1815 the government attempted some control over the cedar trade in the south, more to protect the landowners than the cedar trees or the native inhabitants. The lucrative trade attracted both the wealthy and the poor, ex-convicts and escaped ones, even clergymen were involved in an industry which had little regard for legal niceties and none for the future of the cedar forests. In 1822 after about a decade of cedar cutting in the mountains above Bulli, Governor Macquarie remarked on the scarcity of red cedar: "most of it had been already cut down and carried away to Sydney."⁹

How much the cedar cutters disturbed the growing up of the native children and the lives of their parents cannot be known. Yet there was only one recorded instance of violence against the timber fellers at the Shoalhaven one of them was murdered. On the other hand there were numerous examples of the blacks helping the white man, and the reputation of the Illawarra natives was of 'being very amicably disposed' and 'general mildness of manners'.¹⁰ Their knowledge of the tracks through the thick brush and over the steep hills enabled Charles Throsby to bring his herds from Liverpool down the mountain, not far south of what is now Bulli Pass, to Illawarra in 1815. Drought and caterpillars in the Parramatta region had forced Throsby to seek new pasture, his action opened the era of white settlement.¹¹ The blacks as guides aided the process. They became useful too to the white forces for law and order in the region, as trackers for lost free men or escaped convicts. Governor Macquarie was very pleased on his visit to Illawarra in February 1822, to find that a large group of natives had come to pay their respects, as he recorded in his account of the tour.

We crossed the entrance of Tom Thumb's Lagoon at Mr. Allon's land (one of the original

five land grants) meeting there with about 100 natives who had assembled at this place to meet me and to welcome me to Illawarra. They were of various tribes and some of them had come all the way from Jervis's Bay ... They all know who I was and most of them pronounced my name, Gov Macquarie very distinctly. They were very civil and I regretted exceedingly that I had no tobacco for them.

Governor Macquarie remained with them for about ten minutes and the great man then resumed his journey to Mr. Allen's establishment.¹²

Soon after this visit Macquarie left for England; his replacement, Sir Thomas Brisbane had already arrived. Generous with the granting of land and the convicts to work it, Brisbane enabled several respectable gentlemen to acquire large properties in Illawarra. The next governor, Ralph Darling, had a similar policy so that by 1830 most of the coastal land of Illawarra had been divided up, with sections at Wollongong and Kiama being reserved for future towns.¹³ A magistrate aided by soldiers and police kept order, ensuring that convicts remained subordinate and punishing those who were not, defending the settlers against bushrangers and cattle thieves. The need to act against the blacks did not arise as it had in the Hunter River area. The Illawarra blacks retained their reputation of friendliness. They were still using Lake Illawarra in 1828 as a meeting place for special occasions, as the following account shows.

When I first came down (to Illawarra) in 1828 I resided three months at Spring Hill not far from the old Dapto Road where I carried on my business of bootmaking. The blacks were very numerous in the district at that time especially about the Tom Thumb Lagoon, Mullet Creek and the Lake for they lived mostly on fish ... About 100 blacks including gins and children assembled not far from the house. This gathering was made up of blacks from different parts of the district but were only portions of those from the different parts. They assembled to punish one of their number for taking another man's wife. They were all painted after the fashion of savage warriors with pipe clay and war feathers and other things to give them a warlike look ... The culprit was to stand a certain number of spears being thrown at him as punishment. The man whose gin was taken threw the spears, about one dozen tipped with stone or iron. The crowd formed into wings, the two principals between, one at each end. The spear thrower often pretended to throw to see if he could catch the other unawares, the other would dodge or crouch down behind his shield ... The thrower did a great deal of 'yabbering'. When all the spears were thrown and some were broken on the shield, the man who had been the target walked away unhurt ... When it began to get dark the gins stripped bark from trees and lay down on it beside the fires. With darkness there was a corroboree. The gins played upon sticks and sang and the black fellows danced. The culprit was taken back into the fold and welcomed by his fellows with open arms.¹⁴

Alexander Stewart who recounted this episode believed there were at this time "not more than 60 male residents between Bulli and Jambaroo, married women, two or three girls in their teenhood and a few babies, sixteen children altogether". He was referring to free white people. The aboriginal population of Illawarra on the other hand was estimated later as having been 3,000 in the 1820s. But by 1848 there were only 98.¹⁵ Their daily life and their spiritual existence were both bound up with the natural environment. When this was cleared of timber and fenced in, their source of food disappeared and they became trespassers, in the eyes of the white settler, on the white man's property. To the blacks the land was their own heritage: if the food that was part of that heritage was replaced with the animals

and plants of the white invaders, the land would still have to supply the blacks with food. The amiable blacks began to be seen as the settlers' enemies, as in all the other regions where colonials acquired native hunting grounds. A letter printed in one of the colony's newspapers the *Monitor*, 22 August 1835, exemplifies the problem of the dispossession of Illawarra's native inhabitants.

The Illawarra Blacks

Sir, - We, the Undersigned, have, for a long time past, suffered great and grievous losses from the depredations of the Black inhabitants of this quarter. We have not unfrequently, after our year's toil and anxiety, had the mortification of finding whole acres of our corn, swept away in one night by them, by them, we say, because that fact we can clearly ascertain by the peculiar prints of their feet. But although we have suffered much in the loss of all things out of the house, still we have suffered most in the loss of our pigs; of the two farms alone of Mr. Campbell and Mr. Hindmarsh, no less than twenty have been taken and destroyed within the last three months; and their wonderful adroitness in the art of stealing has baffled all the vigilance up to the 18th of this month, as to the identical individuals, when Mr. Otton's stockman met their chief, Black Harry, with a pig of about one hundred weight on his back, and accompanied by another of his tribe, called Captain Brooks, carrying a bunch of spears and a tomahawk. On being questioned by the stockman, Harry immediately plunged into the bush again, carrying off the pig, while Captain Brooks, with his spear brandished, turned and gave front to the stockman, and so covered Harry's retreat, on which the stockmen went and immediately reported the circumstance to Mr. Hindmarsh, who, with a few others, followed, and guided by the smoke of their fires, came up to their camp, where a large oven was prepared in a peculiar way to roast the pig, and where Captain Brooks had arrived, but not Harry. However, next morning early, on our going to the place again, the watchfulness of their dogs gave them the alarm in time to get off leaving behind them about one half of the pig, cut up and partly roasted, together with a quantity of Mr. Campbell's potatoes and Black Harry's jacket, with some spears, &c.

Now Sir, as silence or supineness on our part, in this case would undoubtedly (in their mind) establish their right to plunder and rob us with impunity, and so render our property insecure and our farms of no value, we humbly hope that you will see the necessity of taking such steps as will appear to you best calculated to put a stop to such daring outrages in future; and as we are now able to identify two individuals, we hope we can put the thing within your reach, and we wait ready to co-operate with the Police or Constable under your orders.

We are, Sir,

With respect,

Your most obedient humble servants,
Thomas Campbell, Patrick Marr,
Michael Hindmarsh, John Richie
Prudenc Otton, Michael Hyam,
William Browne, J.M. Gray.

To W.N. Gray Esq.,
Police Magistrate,
Wollongong,
Kurnell, 26th July
1835.

The men complaining owned land in the southern area of Illawarra, at Kiama, Jamberoo, Gerringong and the Shoalhaven River region. They had acquired their holdings as grants for which they had merely to pay a small amount in quit rent, or as in the case of Mr Hindmarsh, purchased it for 8/- an acre. The land was fertile and as good for growing maize, vegetables and fruit as for dairying and the raising of pigs. These men bred race horses as well as champion dairy cattle. 'Black Harry' and 'Captain Brooker', the culprits named in the letter were as important among their own people as these white gentlemen were in the Illawarra settlement. For they were aboriginal chiefs. Captain Brooker had helped the settlers find the route for cattle and other stock from Lake Illawarra to the Kangaroo Ground in 1821. He was reputed to have seen Captain Cook's landing at Botany Bay and to have watched as Bass discovered the Kiama Blowhole. He was a very old man and blind when he died alone by a camp fire near a lagoon at Kiama in the 1850s. He had survived longer than most of his own and the other Illawarra tribespeople, since the numbers had dropped below 100 before his death.¹⁶ In the 1830s according to more than one account, 100 would gather at Marshall Mount to camp towards the end of the year near the home of Henry Osborne, who "treated them well and they were given plenty of meal and fruit." "They would stop for quite a while and the throwing of spears and boomerangs was a daily sport", evidently also entertaining white visitors who came from all over the district to watch at Christmas time.¹⁷ There were, too, 'many blacks' in a camp close to the Belambi lake, another camp was on the banks of Towradgi Creek.¹⁸ What became of them? Some went into the areas of other blacks; most died out under the impact of a civilization which struck at the foundations of their own; a few stayed, to dwell on the outskirts of the new civilization.

THE CONVICTS

Illawarra was never a penal settlement like Sydney, Hobart, Norfolk Island, Newcastle, Moreton Bay and Port Macquarie. But since the penal system supplied convicts to free settlers in proportion to their landholdings, there were convicts in the Illawarra from 1816. The landowners supplied the convicts assigned to them with food and clothing according to a minimum standard laid down by the government. The government staff used convict labour for the buildings required for the magistrate, the constabulary and the soldiers when they were established at Red Point in 1826. Convicts also built their own barracks, cells and other places of punishment. Governor Bourke's census of 1833 showed that more than half of the men in Illawarra were convicts in the year before the town of Wollongong was established. Seven years after Wollongong's foundation when Illawarra's total population was 4,044 there were still 887 bonded persons, some of these held tickets of leave, the rest were in government employment or as in the case of the majority they were "in private assignment".¹⁹ Governor Bourke, who was the founder of Wollongong in 1834, described the convict system as one of slavery, as did others who observed its workings in the 1830s. Bourke evoked the wrath of some of the big landowners by insisting that the maximum of convicts employed by any one owner should be 70, regardless of the size of the property. He also limited the amount of punishment that could be inflicted by a magistrate for any one offence to 25 or 50 lashes and no more. This too was a matter which caused controversy.²⁰

The treatment of the convicts depended on the disposition of the master, said John Dunmore Lang who visited Illawarra in 1838, describing the scenery as 'overpoweringly sublime' but criticising the injustices of the convict-master relationship.

Whatever arrangement of society that invests any man with such power over the persons and happiness of his fellow creatures as is possessed by the master of a convict or the holder of a

slave, is essentially evil and ought to be deprecated as indicative of an unhealthy state of the body politic.²¹

James Backhouse was another critic; he believed that flagellation was degrading and unchristian, that the punishment was disproportionate to the offence committed and that settlers preferred to have their convicts flogged rather than imprisoned because it did not interrupt the work so much. Governor Bourke reported in 1834 "Prisoners are often subjected to flogging or imprisonment for offences which in the labouring class of England would be punished by reproof or discharge."²²

One of Illawarra's pioneers who developed his Illawarra land with convict labour so successfully that it often aroused comment was James Spearing. He had two grants of 1,000 acres each near Mount Kerra. The University of Wollongong now stands on what was once Spearing's holding, with its thriving fruit trees, vegetable gardens, maize and wheat fields. The convicts at Paulsgrove as the estate was called, had a strict master in James Spearing. One of his employees was a free man who kept a diary of the period he spent in Illawarra, with revealing entries concerning the relations of master and convict.

25 January 1833. Convict T. Hughes taken by Mr. Spearing to court having found some beef on him that he could not account for - 50 lashes

1 March 1834. Spearing took Clarke the tailor to court for robbing (robber) the garden - 25 lashes, but begged off, also Teasdale for not doing as much work as he ought to have done; but was let off. Mr. Spearing returned in devil's own humour from the court.

8 March 1834. Mr. S. took Ryan to the court for refusing to thresh - 25 lashes

5 April 1834. Hunt got 50 lashes for getting drunk and kicking up row at Brown's (George Brown was the owner of Illawarra's first hotel).²³

Convicts who were sentenced to imprisonment by the magistrate in Wollongong might themselves have preferred flagellation. Prisoners sentenced for seven days were given only bread and water in a very small brick room behind the courthouse. The bed had no covers "It was merely a wooden couch with a log for a pillow." The cell was so small that a man "could not take two strides beside his very hard couch."²⁴

Victims of a brutal and brutalizing system the convicts played a significant part in the development of the settlement at Illawarra. It was they who cleared the estates of Mr. Spearing and the other gentlemen, ploughed the land, planted the crops, threshed the wheat then ground it. Mr. Spearing had two of the earliest mills for the purpose. They tended sheep and cattle, horses and pigs, constructed walls and buildings with stones that they had broken and shaped and earned or timber that they had felled and smoothed. If they were skilled they did the carpentry, blacksmithing and mechanical work. When Mr. Spearing on behalf of the other gentlemen of the district wrote to Governor Bourke in 1833 pointing out that all the land was taken up and roads were badly needed, the governor responded by visiting the site of Wollongong in April, 1834.²⁵ Sir Thomas Mitchell, chief surveyor in the colony, supervised the laying out of the town and before the year was out convicts in the government employ were at work on making the town. They built the courthouse, then started on road construction. The Governor was able to report after he made another trip to Illawarra in 1835 that 76 convicts were building the Mount Kerra Road. Road gangs worked 'in irons'; they were chained to prevent escape

into the bush. Bourke advised that they should be relieved of irons and it was found not surprisingly that they worked better. The road was opened in 1838. Mr. Spearing would have been pleased, the road ran alongside part of his estate. Convict gangs worked on all the other Illawarra roads including the pass over the mountain top discovered by Captain Westmacott in 1844 which later was called Bulli Pass.²⁶

Another important project and one that used convict labour for a number of years was Belmore Basin. Bourke saw this as a matter of first importance as he reported to the Colonial Office in July 1834.

The attention of the civil engineer is particularly required ... to a proposed improvement of the Boat Harbour at Wollongong by which the produce of the exceedingly fertile District of Illawarra hampered in by almost inaccessible mountains would be rendered more readily available to the inhabitants of the other parts of the colony.²⁷

The process proved a lengthy one. Convicts were labouring at deepening and widening the harbour in 1839 when one observer arrived in the *Sophia Jane*. He saw the courthouse, the lock-up and other government buildings, and the stockade in which 'many prisoners were confined'. The stockade was the place where the convicts slept. He watched them as they carried out their work of excavating the basin by drilling holes in the rocks ready for the insertion of explosives.²⁸ While work continued, the harbour was used by the small steamships which brought newcomers and supplies to Wollongong and carried away the district's produce to the Sydney market. In 1839 a group of local citizens formed the Wollongong Steam Company which purchased the *Mitford* to 'supply a regular packet between Sydney and Wollongong'.²⁹

Convicts were still labouring at the basin in 1844 when the townpeople had hoped the work would be finished. At their request the government had supplied 300 pounds for the completion of the project. But as a petition of clergy, magistrates and inhabitants of Wollongong complained, instead of the money being used on the expenses involved in the employment of 50 convicts it had gone on the salaries of military men supervising only half that number of prisoners. The petition asked for a further sum to pay for a foreman and 22 convicts "to clear away a mass of rocks obstructing the entrance for steamers wishing to enter the basin in stormy weather".³⁰

The transportation system had been ended by the British Government in 1840 and no more convicts came to New South Wales after that date. The convicts still in the Illawarra district after 1840 were those men and women on tickets of leave, and the majority, who still had to complete sentences imposed before the termination of the system. Of these, 221 were in government employment; all men, they continued through the 1840s to work on road or bridge making, building construction, or to labour at Belmore Basin sometimes in government wharf work. The majority of the bonded, however, continued in private assignment. There were 56 women, mostly in domestic service, and 384 men who were on outside work on the estates of the land owners. Of all sections in the colonial community it was the landowners who would regret the passing of the convict system.³¹

THE LAND OWNERS

From the time Throby Smith brought his herds over the ranges to Wollongong, to the founding of the township in 1834, a period of less than 20 years, most of the more accessible land from Stanwell Park to



LAKE ILLAWARRA

Westmacott was a captain in the 4th Regiment and was Governor Bourke's A.D.C. He left the army to become a land owner, having bought a large estate at Bulli. One of Illawarra's leading gentlemen he became bankrupt in the depression of the 1840s, sold his land and left the district.

Source: Mitchell Library, Sydney.



JAMBEROO VALLEY

The Woodstock Mills were erected in 1838 by Captain J.G. Collins. The mills processed locally grown grain, timber and hops. By 1900, no trace was left of the building which had been used as an inn and a temporary school after the mills ceased to operate. This drawing was executed by R.M. Westmacott prior to 1846 and published in his *Sketches in Australia* (1848).

Source: Mitchell Library, Sydney.



BOURKE FALLS, ILLAWARRA

From a drawing by Robert Marsh Westmacott and included in his *Sketches in New South Wales* (1847).

Source: Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Wollongong. N.S.Wales
April 21. 1834

My dear Richard.

You will perceive by the place from whence this is dictated that I have accomplished my intended visit to the Illawarra District. Had I been successful my intended visit to the Illawarra District. I am instead seated in the house of Mr Gray the Police Magistrate, and here also I am likely to sit as one of our Coast rains has commenced without any prospect of finishing. The settlers tell me I may get out tomorrow and that the road will then be in that state of mud and water as to leave no doubt in my mind, but many

GOVERNOR BOURKE WRITES FROM WOLLONGONG 1834

First page of a letter written by Governor Bourke to his son Richard; it is headed Wollongong N.S. Wales and dated April 21 1834:

My dear Richard,

You will perceive by the place from whence this is dated that I have accomplished my intended visit to the Illawarra District. I am indeed seated in the house of Mr. Gray the Police Magistrate and here also I am likely to sit as one of our Coast rains has commenced without any prospect of finishing. The settlers tell me I may get out tomorrow and that the road will be in that state of mud and water as to leave no doubt in my mind ...

Sources: Sir. R. Bourke Papers, Mitchell Library, Sydney.



WOLLONGONG NATIONAL SCHOOL

The school was built on the site of the present Town Hall in 1837. Sectarian dissent prevented the use of the building until 1852. A new school and headmaster's residence were erected in 1884 in Smith Street and the Crown Street building was sold to Wollongong Borough Council.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



BUSH SCHOOL, ILLAWARRA

This unidentified school was typical of many one teacher schools located in rural Illawarra until after World War One. Decline in the rural population and improved roads contributed to the disappearance of the small schools.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.

Nowra and beyond had been distributed. The 1841 census for the Police District of Illawarra showed that there were 298 landed proprietors, merchants, bankers and professional men in Illawarra's population of 4,044. Assuming that all the people in this superior section owned some land, and not those categorized as landed proprietors, it can be seen that the land in Illawarra was owned by only 7% of the population. One person who deplored the way in which Crown land had been alienated was J.D. Lang; when he viewed Illawarra in 1838 he observed:

It is evident that the formation of an agricultural population was just the purpose to which the district ought to have been appropriated ... It is mortifying, however, to observe at every step in the colony of New South Wales fresh evidence of an entire want of foresight on the part of the former rulers of the colony, or rather of a most unjustifiable disregard of the best interests of the community: for instead of reserving the fertile tract of Illawarra for the settlement of industrious families of the humbler classes of society on small farms of thirty or fifty acres each, to cultivate grain, roots, vegetables, fruit, vines, tobacco and to rear pigs and poultry for the Sydney market, the land has in this district been granted or sold off by the former governors to non-resident proprietors in tracts varying from two thousand to five thousand acres (who) naturally suffer their land to remain in its present wild and uncultivated state as mere CATTLE RUNS (Lang's emphasis) till the increase of population of the colony and the extension of steam navigation along the east coast ... shall have rendered every acre ten times more valuable than it is at present.³²

The reverend gentleman's harsh sermon on land policy was valid to a point but Lang ignored the real culprits. The governors were bound by instruction from their masters in the Colonial Office of the British Government, their policy until 1831 had been to encourage the granting of large tracts of land to those considered most suitable, that is men with the social position and the capital to make best use of the land. As part of the policy on a penal settlement, convicts who had served their sentences and were considered by the governors to be deserving of generosity could be given 40 acres, a cow and some help in the first year of ownership. The free settlers of substance could indeed ask for and receive hundreds or thousands of acres with convicts in proportion. The cost to the recipient was the stocking of the land and the building of a residence suitable to his station in life. Governor Macquarie, often accused by the exclusive group in the colony of being too kind to ex convicts, gave out 8,700 acres in Illawarra in 1817 to five gentlemen. One was David Allen whose 2,000 acre estate at Red Point Macquarie visited in 1822 after he had met with the welcoming party of aborigines. Allen had been rewarded for his work in the Commissariat, the body which looked after feeding and clothing the convicts. His nephew Andrew received 700 acres on the southern banks of the Macquarie River; George Johnston ex army, rum corps, involved in the Bligh rebellion had 1,500 acres on the north west side; Richard Brooks another New South Wales army corps veteran 1,300 acres at Koonawarra and Robert Jenkins, Sydney gentleman, had 1,000 acres at Berkley. Another nine gentlemen, including Darcy Wentworth and William Charles Wentworth, had received grants from Macquarie by 1821, making 20,585 acres alienated in Illawarra. Governors Brisbane and Darling were encouraged by the British government to continue the same practice. In the same period the British government itself awarded a million acres to a group of wealthy gentlemen, the Australian Agricultural Company. This became a matter of particular relevance to Illawarra because though the large grant did not include any land in Illawarra, the company was also given a monopoly of mineral rights in the whole of New South Wales, thereby preventing the production of coal in the southern district until 1849.³³

There was, however, some attempt to settle small farmers. Between 1826 and 1829 there were 21 small grants made in Illawarra. Some of the recipients were veterans from the ranks in the army, men who for their service in the penal settlement the British government wanted to reward. Ten of these veterans had lots of 50-60 acres at Dacto Creek. Nor was all the land given away. Graziers could lease large areas from the government which expected annual rents but did not collect them efficiently. Captain Throsby did not ask for or receive a grant for the land his herds used from 1815. That there was legal recognition of his occupancy was indicated by the governor's authorization in 1817 of the meeting of those wishing grants at Throsby's stockman's hut. (A plaque commemorating the site of the meeting has been placed at the corner of Smith and Harbour Streets in Wollongong). The government did not prevent the owners of large land grants from leasing small sections to tenant farmers. Seventeen of these were shown in the 1828 census in the Camden-Illawarra area.

British thinking about land use took a different direction in the 1830s from 1831 governors were to see that Crown lands were to be sold, not given away. The proceeds of land sale were to be used to finance the bringing of immigrants from Britain. The minimum price was to be five shillings an acre, within the next decade it rose to twelve shillings then to one pound an acre. The assisted migrants would help relieve Britain's poverty problem while providing town and country labour in the colonies. For those migrants who could pay their own way and afford to buy small farms there was still some land available in Illawarra.

The new system brought criticism from those who worked large holdings for grazing but who did not think they should have to pay the same price as those who bought fertile land for cultivation. The easier solution for such people was to go beyond the boundaries set in the settlement to seek new pastures; at first these sheep and cattle owners squatted illegally, later they were allowed to hold land on licence until 1861.³⁴

Of those who had large grants in Illawarra before the new policy was introduced, there were some, who as J.D. Lang alleged, did not use or even visit their holdings. Some of the estates changed hands, some were divided into 50 acre plots and sold as small farms.

Believing that the respectable poor would make good settlers in the colonies, J.D. Lang had himself organized the passage of 100 Protestant immigrants in 1831; in the year that he visited Illawarra he used the government assistance scheme to bring out another 300. Another person well known for her work in the immigration area was Caroline Chisholm, whose face appears on Australian five dollar notes. She became famous for her efforts in aiding women both to migrate to New South Wales and then to find respectable employment for them on arrival. But another aspect of her endeavours brought her to Illawarra. In the economic depression which hit New South Wales in the 1840s she campaigned to settle distressed family groups at Shellharbour. She gained the cooperation of the wealthy Captain Robert Towns who gave 4,000 acres of land; the Wollongong steamer proprietors undertook the transporting of 50 families and their goods at a moderate rate. Caroline Chisholm herself went to Shellharbour with three helpers, in advance of the settlers, and cleared half an acre in readiness for the families. Twenty three, not fifty families arrived at Shellharbour in December 1843 to take up their new lives on the land. They had 'clearing leases' which allowed them ten or more years without rent while they cleared their land and began cultivation. J.D. Lang greatly admired her efforts in spite of his intolerant dislike of the Catholic church to which Chisholm belonged. Her scheme, however, got little encouragement from a government whose members were unsympathetic to creating landed proprietors from the ranks of the

Colonial government at that time consisted of the British appointed governor and a legislative council which comprised one third of members appointed by the Governor and two thirds elected. It was dominated by large land holders whether appointed or elected, the electors themselves had to be men of substance. The pattern was the same when the colonial government was instructed by Britain in 1843 to institute local government in the form of district councils. As in other areas, the chief magistrate in Illawarra was asked to recommend the most suitable of the land owners to be appointed as the six councillors. They were John Berry and James Gray for the Shoalhaven part of the district, Gerard Gerard, Depto, Henry Osborne, Marshall Mount, William Jenkins, Berkeley, and Charles Throsby Smith, Wollongong. John Osborne of 'Garden Hill' Wollongong was made the Warden. So the pioneer council was made up of pioneer land owners all of whom easily met the property qualifications of an estate worth 2,000 pounds.

The district council in Illawarra, like the councils elsewhere, did not ever serve the imperial government's purpose, the local council should take over the responsibility for local roads and bridges while providing money through taxing the local property owners; this was a measure opposed by the latter from the outset. Nor was there approval of the boundaries set by the government. Illawarra district comprised the area from Bulli to Nowra and beyond. The Shoalhaven landowners wanted their own council since they could see 'no community of interest between south and north'. The council survived for some years, doing little. There were provisions for annual elections to fill vacancies caused by retirement and each year until 1853 there were candidates prepared to stand. The election of 1846 showed the nature of the franchise: only 93 people were able to meet the required property qualifications for voting rights. After 1853 the council dwindled until there were only two members and the warden, all there by appointment. Officially dissolved in 1859 the councils were replaced by municipal councils with boundaries more acceptable to the residents. The Wollongong municipality was the first to be constituted under the new arrangement and the elections saw fifteen candidates for the nine positions. John Garrett was elected from amongst these nine as the first mayor.³⁶

By the time the Australian colonists had experienced some major economic and political developments. There were no more convicts (except in Western Australia where the settlers believed they were needed) in 1850! In that year the British government consented to the other colonies' requests for self-government, and they began to prepare their constitutions. In 1851 gold was discovered, first in New South Wales in the Bathurst district, then in Victoria; colonial discussions about desirable forms of government were held on the background of the gold rushes, there was a much larger population, new towns, a great growth in capital and industry. The landed control in politics was challenged by new ideas coming from gold diggers, business and professional people wanting a say in government. South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, one after the other decided to abolish property qualifications and allow all adult males the right to vote (though the ownership of property in more than one electorate allowed plural voting rights to some). The new liberal spirit was manifest in the initiation by legislative assemblies of other democratic reforms, one being the legislation designed to allow small farmers to select 320 acres of land for purchase from the large estates of those who occupied their lands on licence and failed to purchase.³⁷

Illawarra was affected in one way or another by all these developments. The population grew, where as in 1841 the population from Stanwell Park to Nowra had been 4,044, by 1861 there were

6,049 in the Wollongong part of the district and 11,799 in the whole, almost a three-fold increase. The composition of the population had changed, 65% male and only 45% female in 1841, the ratio in 1861 was 3,148 males, 2,903 females in the Wollongong electoral district and 2,944 males, 2,804 females in that of Kiama. 1861 was the year when for the first time the adult males of New South Wales were to vote. The election of 1856, the first self-government election was the last with a property qualification for voters for the Legislative Assembly; voters had to own freehold worth 100 pounds, or its equivalent. The role of electors in Wollongong, Kiama and Shoalhaven held just over 1,400 names. The potential voters included householders and salaried men who like clergymen were paid 100 pounds annually. There were over 600 who held land on lease and 643 who owned freehold land. So there were more than 1,200 occupiers of land in Illawarra. The size of their holdings varied considerably but none was less than 100 pounds in value, indicating a sufficient holding for successful farming. J.D. Lang would have been pleased if he could have foreseen the developments which took place in the twenty years following his critical observations of land usage in Illawarra.³⁸

1861 too was the year when the New South Wales government passed Free Selection before Survey legislation. There was a certain amount of free selection in Illawarra though much less than in areas west of the ranges. Most of Illawarra's land was unsuitable for large flocks of sheep and the climate proved unkind to wheat growing. The farmers in the 1860s successfully raised dairy cattle, pigs and fowls and the food to sustain them; they grew too, potatoes and other vegetables, citrus and stone fruits. Most farmers had bee hives, the bees well sustained by the honey from the native flowering trees. The wealthy land owners took pride in cattle and horse breeding and their names featured regularly in Illawarra's first local newspaper, the *Illawarra Mercury*, from the time it was founded in 1866, as the owners of winning race horses at the local race meetings and of prize bulls and cows at the annual Agricultural Shows at Wollongong and Kiama. The produce of all the farmers, the butter, cheese, eggs, bacon, honey, fruit and vegetables, was sent regularly to the Sydney market from the ports at Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama.³⁹

Coal was added to the items exported from the region in the 1860s; its production and export were to cause major changes in the pattern of economic and social life in Illawarra, particularly in its northern part. The *Illawarra Mercury* hailed its appearance in an enthusiastic report in its issue of 20 April 1867.

Illawarra is in possession of an article of domestic use and export not second in importance to the richest goldfield in the country or indeed in the world ...

The report expressed the view that gold mining disturbed the social relationships of life, creating unhealthy speculation because it was uncertain and exhaustible. But coal would have much better consequences. "Illawarra's black diamonds will promote commerce and add to our social industry."

The discovery of coal in the south had been made not long after its presence in the Hunter River region was observed in June 1796. It was actually used by Mr Clark and the other two survivors of the *Sydney Cove*'s long boat company of seventeen, who had struggled along the shore from Point Hicks, where the boat had been wrecked, in an attempt to reach Port Jackson. The surviving three reached Coalcliff, as it was later appropriately named, on 15 May 1797 and warmed themselves by a fire made from lumps of coal from the cliff. The next day they had been able to continue and were picked up by fishermen at Wattamolla mid-way between Coalcliff and Botany Bay. Governor Hunter sent Bass to

confirm the existence of coal in the region, but because of the apparent lack of a suitable harbour in the south, it was the northern deposits that were developed. Governor King made a small settlement at the Hunter River entrance in 1801; three years later, immediately after the rebellion of the Irish prisoners in the Sydney settlement, he decided to make coal mining a form of punishment for insubordinate convicts, especially Irish. Production was slowed by the wearing of chains so these were removed during work hours. Responsibility for coal mining was assumed by the Australian Agricultural Company after the British parliament had granted the group its million acres of land and mineral rights in New South Wales in the mid 1820s.⁴⁰

Thus when James Shoober, Illawarra land owner, found coal on his property in 1828 and took a bag of it to Sydney for government inspection, he was prevented from doing anything further. Captain Westmacott was another who was frustrated; Governor Bourke's A.D.C., he had purchased in 1838 the land at Bulli which had been granted to Cornelius O'Brien ten years before. (Westmacott paid five shillings an acre for the 300 acres). As one of the investors in the Wollongong Sydney steamer scheme, he wished to use the coal on his land to supply the steamer and in 1839 began preparations for opening a mine.

An announcement in the *Australian* brought an immediate response from the Australian Agricultural Company; its members in London had angry discussions with Lord Russell, the colonial secretary. They complained that they had not been able to get sufficient convict labour for their Newcastle mine to meet the rising demand for coal. 133 convicts in 1837 had been reduced to 108 and were still diminishing in number, they blamed the government in New South Wales; they were alarmed at Westmacott's proposal to open a mine. As the *Historical Records of Australia* for 1840 reported:

His Lordship was reminded that the working of the Coal Mines by the Company was different from any private Speculation, that it was a public object from which the community generally was benefitted ... that upon that ground the Company had a prior claim ... His Lordship was informed that unless the Company were supplied with Convicts by the Local Government in sufficient numbers to procure Coal equal to the demand, the Directors would be obliged to hire Free Miners in this Country, which would entail a very large expenditure and the Company would consequently be obliged to raise the price of Coal to at least 5 pr. C., (per cent) that in such case the Government would themselves be considerable losers.⁴¹

In the correspondence that followed between the Home Office and the colonial government, Gibbs defended the claims of Westmacott. But the diminishing number of convicts caused by the ending of the Transportation System affected Westmacott as much as, if not more than, the Agricultural Company. Without cheap labour he could not afford to produce coal, nor were the early 1840s favourable for new undertakings. Westmacott was one of the victims of the depression affecting landowners. He had to sell off his Bulli land in 1843.

By 1849 the depression over and the Agricultural Company's monopoly ended, James Shoober made a second, successful attempt and from his Mount Keira mine was able to supply coal for the Wollongong steamer. There was much rejoicing in Wollongong, as an account in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 10 September 1849 indicated, when the first coal was taken to the steamer. A triumphal procession accompanied the coal cars to the harbour and afterwards "at a dinner lasting from four in the afternoon to cock-crow, 80 gentlemen toasted the lucky proprietor of the immense coal mountain."⁴²

Henry Osborne opened the new period of coal for export in 1857 with a much more profitable mine than Shoorber's. The Osborne Wallsend mine was in an area of Mt. Keira where the coal seam was much thicker; then followed mines at Wootton, Bellambi and Bulli. By 1862 coal was being shipped away not only to Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, but also much further over the sea to China.

The advent of a coal export industry brought workers to the mines, the mushrooming of villages with their attendant consumer needs, both economic and social. The export trade required the extension of the facilities at the Wollongong harbour and the creation of jetties as outlets for the northern mines. All of these effects of the coal trade promoted commerce as the *Illawarra Mercury* had prophesied, and were reflected in the growth of Wollongong's business establishments, and in the social patterns.⁴²

CHURCH AND SCHOOL

The first school in Illawarra was established in 1827 by the Church of England as one of its parochial schools. It was funded by the government as were all the schools of the Anglican Church, which by the Church and Schools Corporation Charter had exclusive rights to government financing. There were only eleven children enrolled with an average attendance of four boys and three girls.⁴³ Seven years later there were many more children, their parents including Catholics, Presbyterians and Methodists as well as Anglicans. When Wollongong township was laid out areas were set aside for churches. The Church of England had pride of place with the site on the hill for the future Saint Michael's, the Catholic church established itself down by the harbour; land was made available too for the Presbyterian church whose minister arrived in 1837. Each began educating the children of its members both in a Sunday School and in school on week days, at first in the same building used as a place of worship. Until the Anglican church was built, Charles Throsby Smith allowed one of his barns to be used both as church and school from 1833. The Catholics had a temporary chapel from 1833. Methodists and Baptists received their clergy in the early 1840s - Congregationalists in 1856.

With the ending of the Church and School Corporation in 1833, Governor Bourke was determined to introduce the Irish National system of schooling into the Australian colony. This would mean, as had been the experience in Ireland, that children of all faiths would be educated together, instead of separately, or not at all as would be the case if a church could not afford to maintain a school. Religious instruction was given in the Irish National system in such a way as not to arouse sectarian prejudices. In 1838 he was able to report to the colonial office in Britain that at a public meeting held in the District of Illawarra the establishment of schools was held as a boon of highest value, in a resolution moved by the Church of England chaplain in the district. A contract was let for the erection of the school; building proceeded on the corner of Crown and Kembla streets, the site of the future Council Chambers and Town Hall.

But even before the school was ready for use it became a subject for controversy in Illawarra, part of the colonial opposition which prevented the consummation of Bourke's plans for government schools. Antagonism came chiefly from the Anglicans as Sir George Gipps, Bourke's successor, explained concerning the National school at Wollongong, which paradoxically was "at this time very free of religious dissentions" he noted:

... under the auspices of the Diocesan Committee, however, another school was shortly afterwards commenced, for the erection of which 50 pounds only was raised by private contributions, whilst 150 pounds was supplied by the Committee, and it was under these circum-

stances that I was called on by the Diocesan Committee to contribute 200 pounds towards the erection of the school, the establishment of which would render useless the school that was then building by the Government, or at any rate defeat the object which the Government had in view in undertaking it.⁴⁴

But it was not just the Diocesan Committee and the stimulation of Anglican opposition by the appointment of Australia's first Church of England Bishop, W.G. Broughton which frustrated what had seemed a popular move to establish a government school. John Dunmore Lang voiced the stern disapproval of the Scotch Church in New South Wales and its Presbyterian clergymen in Illawarra, J. Tait, joined with the Rev D. Meares the Anglican rector, in organising a petition of 36 names against the government school in Wollongong.

There were, on the other hand, a lot more townspeople who did want the school and were prepared to put their names to a memorial organised by Father John Rigney, Wollongong's first Catholic priest. The memorial had the names of 112 citizens, 60 of them the parents or guardians of 123 children. All the children who belonged to "the humbler classes" would be likely to attend the government school, said Father Rigney. He would have been concerned about the children of the Irish and of other Catholics in the area including the children of convicts. But that is not to say he was speaking only for Catholic parents: not all the people who signed Father Rigney's memorial were of his faith, there were philanthropic Methodists like Ellen Lysaght, whose name is on one of the commemorative windows in Wollongong's beautiful old Methodist, now Uniting Church, and others who did not share the sectarian views of the opponents of the National School.

The school when completed did not open. Faced with the opposition of powerful sections in the colonial community together with the expense of providing funds for all church schools the government had to capitulate. The Wollongong school was the only one built for the Irish National system and it remained unused for ten years. It fell into disrepair and had to be extensively renovated before its doors could be opened to school children in 1851. Its history after this date is worth noting. It was replaced by a larger school in Smith Street after thirty years' use. A strong public campaign then had to be waged to prevent the site from being sold to business people in the town; Wollongong's Mayor urged the need of the ground for a town hall and other municipal use — the land had been public property since the earliest settlement as a burial ground, next for the police, then for a school site. In 1885 the government agreed and sold the land to the Wollongong Council for five pounds.⁴⁵

Since the educational opportunities of Illawarra's children in the 1840s had to depend on the ability of the churches to provide schooling, there was some inequality. Children at Charcoal Creek, later Unanderra, were able to attend a school opened by the Presbyterians in 1840. Others living in Bellambi in 1843 could get their education "in a slab and bark hut on the side of the road about a mile from Angel's Bridge" as one old resident recalled in 1921. If there was no school near enough to where the children lived, they "got their education from their mothers." In the towns of Kiama and Wollongong the situation was much better: all the religious denominations conducted schools and there were in addition private schools run by individuals. For example, there was an announcement in the Australian of 1 January 1839,

Mademoiselle Dubois has taken that spacious house lately occupied by Rev Mr. Meares at Wollongong where she intends opening an establishment for the Education of Young Ladies

in which undertaking she will be joined by Miss Storey, a young lady of high respectability and whose accomplishment fit her for so arduous and responsible a duty.

For 34 guineas a year the young ladies were promised board and general education including English, Reading, Writing, Grammar and Arithmetic as well as Plain and Fancy Needlework. For 50 guineas, French, Music and Dancing would be included, while Dancing, for another eight guineas was another extra. Each young lady was required to bring six towels, fork and spoon, bed and bedding.

Another 'select seminary for young ladies' was advertised in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 October 1842. The charge for boarders was 80 guineas while day pupils paid two to seven guineas a quarter depending on whether singing and music were taken. Such expense for schools of this nature could only be undertaken by those who were sufficiently wealthy, as well as sufficiently enlightened, to have their daughters educated soundly. Some of the wealthy employed private tutors, as part of their staff of servants, to teach their sons at home, with governesses for their daughters. Unmarried genteel women who had migrated to Australia from England were glad to become governesses if the household was sufficiently respectable. As for the girls, there were private schools in both Wollongong and Kiama for the sons of gentlemen.

For the parents in the 'humbler classes', even the fees charged by the church schools would have been a financial burden, one which pressed heavily in the 1840s when the Illawarra district shared in the economic depression which struck the rest of the colony. By 1844 as the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported, George Brown, publican and landowner, was advising other stock owners in Illawarra to follow his example and establish boiling-down works. It was more profitable to produce tallow than to keep sheep for their wool or cattle for sale as meat.

In 1848 the colonial government placed elementary education in the control of two boards, the Denominational School Board which looked after the four groups of church schools, Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist, and the Board of National Education for government schools which the government had embarked on building. Other 'non-vested' schools which the Government did not own also accepted funds and inspection from the National Board. In the 1850s with the economic prosperity and population increase caused by the gold discoveries, Illawarra shared in the promotion of national schools. The increase in commercial activity which favoured the growth of more liberal ideas about education and the role of the government as a leading force in reforms, though Illawarra experienced some struggles between the church and the new school movement in the community. The re-opened Wollongong school was followed during the 1850s by other National Board schools at Dapto, Fairy Meadow, Berkley and Mount Kembla, and, further south, at Marshall Mount, Shellyharbour and Jerrara. The 1860s saw more schools opening. Clifton, Bulli, Bulli North (later Austinmer) and Mt. Keira, and in the south Kiama, Shoalhaven, Stoney Creek, Omega and Minnamurra all had public schools available for the education of children in their own localities.⁴⁶

As a result of the greater accessibility of education and some improvements in the quality of teaching, there was a pronounced improvement in the numbers of those who could both read and write. In 1861 nearly 1/3 of the male population both in the Kiama and Wollongong districts were illiterate. The situation was worse in the case of females—about 37% in Wollongong and 40% in Kiama could neither read nor write. The figures for Illawarra compared 'favourably' with those of the colony as a whole: only 55.7 of males and 51.8 of females were literate. It must be said that the inadequacy of the educat-

ion system for a whole generation, whether born in the Illawarra region or outside it, was reflected in the 1881 census figures. Ten years later Kiama's literacy rates for males had increased by 10%, with 12% in the case of females; in Wollongong the increases were 6% and 9% respectively. The colonial figures showed a more dramatic increase in literary rates: 16% for males and 18% for females. A generation after 1881, the colonial figures showed that 87.5% of males and 86.8% of females could both read and write, the Kiama rates were almost the same as for the colony; Wollongong was 2% behind. Overall in the 30 years after 1881 the literacy rate for the youth group 10-20 increased from 68.66% to 96.75% for the male section and from 75.27% to 98.08% for females.⁴⁷

The southern part of the Illawarra region with Kiama as the centre, had a population of 5,486 in 1861, the Wollongong district from Dapto for the northern most village of Stanwell Park numbered 6,049. In each case there were more males than females, 258 more in Kiama, 243 more in Wollongong. The two districts had much the same traditions, differences in the experiences of young people and family life depended more on the economic situation of the parents, particularly of the father than on the part of the region in which they were born. The church to which the parents officially belonged was an important centre of social life as well as the accepted register for births, marriages and deaths. Outside the church the Agricultural Society was probably the most important institution in both Kiama and Wollongong. The shows they organised were the mirror image of life in a country town. The prize beasts were the property of the most successful group in the community. The humbler folk tended the animals of their betters or laboured in their fields in what was predominantly a rural society.

By 1861 however, the entry of a few landowners into the coal trade was laying the bases for changed social patterns. This diversification involved directly only a small percentage of the population in the areas close to Wollongong and north of the township, either as mine owners or mine workers, Illawarra remained a rural region. Yet the impact of coal on the Wollongong district was already visible in 1861, and would be quite marked twenty years later. Coal not only created new villages with schools, churches, shops and hotels; it also brought into being a new type of community and new relations between employers and workers. Growing up in a mining community would be a different experience from growing up in the other country villages.

CHAPTER 2

NINETEENTH CENTURY ILLAWARRA

LIFE IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

FARMING FAMILIES

Twenty miles south of Wollongong lies the township of Kiama. White settlement of the Kiama district began in the 1820s with the arrival of cedar gatherers. During the 1830s, those few select settlers who received land grants often acquired large amounts of property in the Kiama area. Most were recent immigrants. Men such as Henry Osborne from County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, a Protestant gentry immigrant of the late 1820s who received a grant of 2,500 acres at Marshall Mount near Dapto. By the 1850s, he had large property holdings in the Illawarra region, as well as southern New South Wales and the Maitland district near Newcastle. Another Northern Irishman from County Armagh, James Mackay Grey, purchased his brother-in-law's grant of 1,200 acres south of present-day Kiama and called it Omega's Retreat. Other immigrants moved south from Wollongong, settling in the Jamberoo Valley and along the coastline around south of Kiama. The township of Kiama was surveyed in 1839 and laid out in the 1840s. Kiama municipality, including also Jamberoo and the settlement of Gerringong to the south, was established in 1850. At the 1861 census, the municipal population, which included Jamberoo and Gerringong, was 4,071.¹

The new settlers cut down the trees and cleared the land. European agriculture soon changed the natural environment forever. 'From the sea to the mountains - eye far up the mountain sides, and occasionally to the very summits, pasture farms cover the face of the country: grass, grass, everywhere on every flat, hill, and dale; in every nook and cranny' was the observation of a nineteenth century traveller. White settlement also displaced the original inhabitants. In 1872, the local Kiama press noted that the magistrate, H. Connell, had distributed blankets to aborigines on Queen Victoria's birthday. 'The number last year was about thirty, this year they had diminished to fourteen'. A decade later, this annual event was an occasion for whites to congratulate themselves on their charity.

The number of real dark skins who put in an appearance on Wednesday last was some five or six less than in 1881, but the total and one in excess was made up by youngsters of questionable colour and "Captain Cook" from Jervis Bay, who, we have since learned, obtained a blanket a month ago at Shoalhaven, but came to Kiama for another. Mary - "Queen Gooseberry" - the oldest aboriginal of this district, put in an appearance, and looked

as he did ten years ago. There were three families of parents and three children each, and two of parents and four children, one husband and wife without children, old Mary and two girls, and even single young men. After the distribution was over the blacks gave three hearty cheers for the Queen, and one more for Connell.²

By the 1880s, immigrant family grouping had long replaced aboriginal kinship networks in the Illawarra. The estates of the gentry employed large numbers. In 1841 one farm of 300 acres at Jambaroo provided a living for 82. A policy of clearing leases also allowed tenants to develop 20 acres for a five-year period without paying rent. By 1856, James Grey had 20 tenants. In the words of a nineteenth century resident, 'all knew when rent day came round for the Omega Retreat Tenants, James Mackay Grey could be seen standing at the corner of Manning and Terralong Streets, Kiama, saluting each tenant as he passed to the I.G.N. Coy's (Illawarra Steamship Navigation Company's) wharf with produce'. Under the terms of the immigration assistance schemes inaugurated in the mid-1830s, large land holders were paid bounties to sponsor married couples and also farm labourers. In 1841 a number of Northern Irish immigrants arrived to work on the estates of Henry Osborne. In 1843, George Grey, a relative of James Grey leased 1,000 acres on the Riversdale Estate near to Kiama in order to settle a number of immigrants and relatives from his own County of Fermanagh in Northern Ireland. Over the succeeding decades a process of chain migration would bring out more immigrants. Many would later move on from Kiama up into the Wingecarribee attracted by the Free Selection Act of 1851 but others remained to settle in the Kiama district. The Northern Irish connection was significant. Kiama was very much a Protestant town and particularly a Northern Irish Protestant settlement. At the 1881 Census, members of the Church of England made up 38.8% of Kiama township's population, Presbyterians 26.0% and Roman Catholics only 9.5%. (In contrast, the respective figures at nearby Jambaroo were 34.9%, 14.8% and 28.9%). Approximately half the brides and grooms marrying in Kiama Church of England between 1866 and 1875 were born in Ireland. Many were from Ulster, with Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh predominant. Most Presbyterian in Kiama were also from Ulster. Until the 1870s at least, the majority of Australian-born children in Kiama would grow up in families where at least one and often both their parents had been born overseas, with over 40% of Irish heritage.³

Kiama Church of England Marriages 1866 - 75
Birthplaces of Grooms and Brides

| Place of Birth | Grooms | | Brides | |
|--------------------|--------|------|--------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| Overseas — | | | | |
| England | 11 | 13.3 | 8 | 9.6 |
| Scotland | 1 | 1.2 | | |
| Ireland | 42 | 50.8 | 38 | 45.8 |
| Other | 3 | 3.6 | | |
| Australia — | | | | |
| Sydney | 8 | 9.8 | 8 | 7.2 |
| Illawarra | 9 | 10.8 | 21 | 25.3 |
| Other N.S.W. | 8 | 9.8 | 7 | 8.4 |

Source: Parish registers of Christ Church, Kiama

Kiama Births 1861, 1871
Birthplaces of Parents

| Birthplaces | 1861 | | | | 1871 | | | |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|------|-----|------|
| | Mother | Father | Mother | Father | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Ireland | 81 | 46.4 | 78 | 45.8 | 47 | 38.8 | 52 | 43.0 |
| England | 46 | 26.4 | 53 | 31.0 | 20 | 16.5 | 26 | 21.5 |
| Scotland | 7 | 4.0 | 11 | 6.4 | 6 | 5.0 | 9 | 6.6 |
| Australia | 30 | 17.2 | 18 | 10.5 | 46 | 38.0 | 34 | 28.1 |
| Other | 11 | 5.7 | 13 | 7.6 | 2 | 1.8 | 1 | 0.8 |

Source: Register General's Records

Farming life predominated in the Kiama district. Of the 28 marriages in the Kiama registry district in 1861 (which included also Gerringong and Jambaroo) eleven of the grooms were farmers and another eleven were farm labourers or labourers, while four were in skilled trades. A decade later, fifteen of the 29 grooms were farmers, only three were labourers, and five were skilled tradesmen. Of the eighty-three couples marrying in the Church of England 1866-75, almost two-thirds of the fathers of grooms were farmers and over two-thirds of brides' fathers. Over half of the grooms were themselves farmers.

In common with the mid-nineteenth century colonial experience elsewhere, marriage was usually delayed until the mid-20s, particularly for males. Of those grooms marrying in the Church of England 1866-75, the median age for grooms was 27.6 and for brides 23.6. Perhaps the most striking difference between Kiama and many other Australian communities was the high preponderance of females in the district. In 1861, the Kiama township itself had included 358 males and 382 females. Even in the surrounding rural areas males only outnumbered females by 320 to 288. Kiama men obviously did not have to go far to find a bride. Over half of the grooms and three-quarters of the brides marrying in the Church of England 1866-75 were residing in Kiama or its suburbs at the time of their marriage. By 1871, only about one-eighth of middle-aged males in the Kiama district had never been married, a figure well below the colonial average.

Kiama Municipality
Marriage Data 1871
Never Married %

| Age group | Kiama | | New South Wales | |
|-----------|-------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| | Males | Females | Males | Females |
| 20 - 24 | 84.1 | 72.1 | 84.2 | 63.4 |
| 25 - 29 | 45.2 | 25.8 | 57.3 | 23.8 |
| 40 - 49 | 8.9 | 9.3 | 24.8 | 4.0 |

Note: The New South Wales figures actually include the age group 45 - 49

Sources: New South Wales Census for Kiama and suburbs, Gerringong Village and district and Jambaroo, 1871 and Peter F. McDonald, *Marriage in Australia*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1974, p. 96.

Many marriages were founded on the basis of maintaining small family farms. The land clearances of the 1840s had brought about a proliferation of tenant farming and even the ownerships of small properties. Until the 1860s, wheat and bean grown in the district. The appearance of rust in the wheat crop forced many farmers to look elsewhere. Large landholders such as the Osbornes had brought in dairy cattle in the 1840s. At the 1861 census, out of a total population of 4,206, there were 361 farm proprietors or tenant farmers in the Kiama district, while 297 males assisted on farms and other 128 were farm servants. Dairying became the life blood of the Southern Illawarra. By the mid 1880s, the Kiama district was becoming the centre of dairying in New South Wales. A visitor to Kiama in 1889 noted the number of small farms surrounded by stone fences built by the English immigrant John Newing who'd arrived in 1857.

This is decidedly a butter country. Little wheat or maize is grown here. Labour seems at a discount. It is an easy thing to milk a few cows and forward the butter to market ... They manage to divide their small farms into different parcels of land, surrounded by loose stones . They have but to gather and pile them up some three or four feet in height, and a paddock or farm is fenced in.⁴

Dairying enabled the small man to survive. Labour-intensive, a dairy suited a married farmer. Often daughters of farmers, wives assisted actively in the dairy. Children also played an important part by helping out with the milking morning and evening. On small farms, churning, or turning the milk into butter, was carried out by hand. Butter, and its export to Sydney, became the economic staple of the district. Butter making was hard-work but also profitable.

At half-a-crown or two shillings a pound it was very remunerative, and it must still suffice for Illawarra's wants, especially as the women and children can make it; and the farmer is only expected to drive in the cows, morning and evening, jog to the sea port on the old mare, once a week, or fortnight, and drive before him a packhorse, laden with a keg or two of the precious material.⁵

The mid to late nineteenth century were decades of growing families in Kiama. Some couples started early. Of the 28 marrying in the Kiama registry district in 1861, one couple had registered the birth of their first child six months before their marriage and four others within six months of marrying. Eighteen couples had births of children registered in both 1861 and 1871. Of these, seven couples, married between 1847 and 1855, had by 1871 a total of 82 children of whom only eight had died. Eleven couples, married between 1856 and 1861 had by 1871 a total of 74 children of whom only five had died. By colonial standards, child mortality in Kiama was low and fertility high. Mortality rates in Kiama declined from 6.7% of live births in 1861 to 4.8% in 1871. The total colonial figures were much higher, being between 9% and 12% in Sydney for the years 1860-73. In terms of fertility, one of the above sample of couples had seventeen children over 22 years and another fourteen over 24 years. Overall, the fertility of these eighteen couples represent an approximate average of birth for every 20 months of marriage. Although many of these couples had still not completed their families in 1871, such an average still compares more favourably with a mean birth interval of 28.6 months and a median of 24 months in the country district of mid-nineteenth century York in Western Australia. Generalising from this sample, it can be suggested that mid-nineteenth century Kiama children were growing up in already large families which were still being added to in the 1880s. By 1871, half the population of Kiama was aged under fifteen. Most in the 1860s - 1880s, of the Anglican faith at least,

were growing up on the farm, sons and daughters of farmers or rural labourers.⁶

Of his childhood at Kiama in the 1850-60s, J.E. Carruthers wrote sixty years later, 'reclused on the coast, and almost inaccessible save by steamer, life there was very leisurely. Cow time on the farm and "steamer days" at the port marked off the hours and the days for most of the rural and urban population.'⁷ Agricultural shows were some of the highlights of the year, while entertainment for adults and children often involved forms of rural sports still to be found in parts of agricultural Britain and Ireland. The Queen's Birthday in May was a time for rural celebration.

Climbing a Greasy Pole,
Jumping in Sacks;
a Jug-Jug (sic) Match,
A Smoking Match, a
race between Sir Young
Ladies for a new bonnet,
Catching a Pig with a
Soapy Tail, The whole to
conclude with
GRINNING THROUGH A HORSE COLLAR.⁸

Kiama Church of England Baptisms 1856-90
Occupations of Parents (Fathers)

| Occupation | No. | % |
|--------------------|-----|------|
| Farmers | 494 | 49.5 |
| Miners | 11 | 1.2 |
| Professional | 25 | 2.5 |
| Commercial | 118 | 11.6 |
| Government Service | 38 | 3.8 |
| Skilled Trades | 96 | 9.3 |
| Unskilled/Domestic | 186 | 18.6 |
| Other/Not Known | 35 | 3.5 |
| | 997 | 100% |

Source: Parish registers of Christ Church, Kiama.

If agriculture provided a way of life in the Kiama district then so too did religion. Most social activities revolved around the churches. A Church of England was opened at Kiama in 1843, a Presbyterian Church in 1848 and a Wesleyan Chapel in 1849. 'What a sight it was on Sundays to see the roads lined with horsemen and horsewomen, with an occasional gig or spring-cart to vary the scene, all wending their way to the churches and chapels; and at the hour of service to note the grounds surrounding the places of worship filled with horses and vehicles!'⁹

The churches played an important role in instructing the young. Prominent were the Sunday

Schools The Sunday School movement had begun in England in the 1700s as a means of trying to maintain the Anglican faith amongst the urban masses. By the nineteenth century, Sunday schools of the Protestant denominations could involve not only instruction in reading the Bible but also other forms of education and respectable recreation. At Kiama, the Protestant Sunday Schools had a large following with regular forms of inspection and examination. In 1843, the Presbyterians in the district, who followed the 'Free Church' following the disruption in Scotland, began a Sunday school at Jambaroo (the Kiama Presbyterian parish included Jambaroo from 1849). Between 1858 and 1875, the Presbyterian Minister at Kiama was John Kinross, later Principal of St. Andrew's College, Sydney University. By 1865 there were nearly 200 children enrolled in the Presbyterian Sunday school classes. The Methodists also started a Sunday school at Kiama in 1863. In 1871, there were 108 children on the rolls, with an average attendance of 64 and a library of over 100 books.¹⁰

The Sunday School was a centre of social life for children. There were regular picnics, particularly on such anniversaries as the celebration of Queen Victoria's birthday or the white settlement of the colony. The annual inspection, when the local clergy examined the children on the year's work, were gala occasions with tents and food for the children afterwards. In many respects, instruction in a Sunday school suited the educational needs of an agricultural district. Children were still able to help out on the farm during the week and also attend school on a Sunday when all the family would be expected to attend church and observe the Sabbath rest. The instruction at least provided basic literacy in a way which might have been more acceptable than full-time education.

On occasions, there was little difference between full and part-time education provided through the church. By the 1860s, the Kiama Church of England was conducting both a Sunday and a day school. The day school received grants from the Denominational Board of Education. Its instruction, however, still focused on the scriptures. Attendance fluctuated with the season. As the local press reported in January 1868 at a period when wheat still grew in the district:

An examination in Scripture took place last Tuesday at Mrs. Threlton's Church of England Denominational School, began and concluded with prayer by the Rev. Abraham King, after which the little ones adjourned to play in the adjoining paddock, and demolished Sunday estates and mild drinkables - the Wesleyan Sunday School children were entertained in nearly the same way on Monday. The two schools number nearly 120 children, but at this season, many are obliged to help their parents in the various operations of harvesting.¹¹

Many parents placed their children in school or took them out according to the seasons, or the needs of the dairy. In 1863, a total of 113 children (81 boys and 32 girls) attended Kiama Church of England Denominational Schools but only 68 (50 boys and 18 girls) were actually on the rolls at the end of the year. The average numbers in daily attendance were 33 boys and 11 girls. The school house was the old wooden church building which was in bad repair. The Church of England Inspector for the Denominational Board noted,

The children are not very neat, and are very unpunctual. The instruction is based on the monitorial system, but it does not embrace needlework. In grammar the upper class had made very fair progress, the knowledge of scripture history is fair, and for the most part the progress in the remaining subjects is very fair, but too much confined to the upper classes. The teacher must have been very attentive, to have done so much under very unfavourable

By December 1864, there were about 115 children attending the Church of England Sunday School. The day school had closed. Most small farmers and others seemed content with their children receiving some form of part-time instruction with an emphasis on reading the Bible. Support for different forms of instruction would come from elsewhere.¹³

BRINGING UP RESPECTABLE CHILDREN

By the Census of 1871, Kiama had become a centre of some size and prosperity, with a population of 784 in the township and 497 in its rural suburbs.

The Township of Kiama stands on the margin of a little bay; it extends westward from the sea, on the roads running thence towards Jamberoo, and Gerringong, and by four or five well-worn streets, some parallel and others at right angles to those roads. There are fewer large buildings than at Wollongong, but the town is more compact; every house and cottage is occupied, and in good repair, new ones in course of erection, and the place has a more prosperous thriving appearance than Wollongong - less by the coal trade - of which Kiama has none. Its dock is about half completed; it is favoured with a good court-house, and a beautiful Presbyterian church; there are three other churches, and a chapel, that are not beautiful - though tolerably commodious - and it has been saved the infliction of a gaol, but is dissatisfied on that account. The Township is almost encircled by rounded hills, and sloping valleys (with cottages here and there), sombered by the presence of lordly fig-trees, and graced by full palms that the spoiler has spared; and above it the saddle-back mountain upheaves its length.¹⁴

There had been 138 houses in Kiama in 1861, 122 built of weatherboard. By the Census of 1881, there would be 297 houses in the town, half of weatherboard but one-third stone. The growth of provincial urban living was associated with new cultural forms. If Kiama by the 1860s was a place of Protestant respectability, then there were also some signs of it espousing the ideals of liberal moral enlightenment. The prospect of material and social advancement through individual effort was one of the major aims of the supporters of the liberal state in the mid-nineteenth century. To improve oneself morally and mentally was an ethic of nineteenth century liberal Protestantism. So it was, in part, in Kiama.

One of the signs of individual improvement was support for temperance. The campaign against drink was one of the major social movements in mid-nineteenth century Britain. For all to abstain from liquor would surely mean a better, more hard-working and harmonious society. In England, the temperance movement flourished in the Northern industrial centres and areas of non-conformist belief. In Kiama, temperance also was related to the Protestant Churches. A 'Total Abstinence Society' connected with the Presbyterian Church and Wesleyan Chapel had held meetings in the 1850s. By the mid-1860s, the society was particularly active, warning of the dangers of drink to family life, 'the broken-hearted wives, deserted children and desolated homes of the drunkard'. In common with the temperance supporters in Britain, those in Kiama paid particular care to the young. 'Bands of Hope' had been formed in England in the late 1840s and early 1850s to alert children to the dangers of drink and bring them up with both proper work habits and respectable forms of recreation. A Band of Hope society was formed in Kiama in January-February 1870; within six months, it had 120 children enrolled. Programmes at its evening



KIAMA HARBOUR, 1874

Construction of a permanent harbour basin commenced in 1871 and was officially opened in 1876. The port was used to send dairy and agricultural produce to markets in Sydney and later was important for the despatch of blue metal from the basalt quarries.

Source: Mitchell Library, Sydney.



KIAMA, 1920's

The opening of the railway increased the attraction of Kiama as a tourist resort. Beautification of the town was promoted and from 1903 hundreds of trees were planted along the streets of the town. The Norfolk Pines along Terralong Street were planted in 1905. (Samuel Cocks photograph).

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



ABORIGINE FAMILY, KIAMA

Photographed by Samuel Cocks in the late 1890's at the encampment near the Minnamurra Bridge (Samuel Cocks photograph).

Source: University of Wollongong Archives



MILLER FAMILY, OMEGA

Robert and Mary Miller and their children Florence, Stanley and Reginald lived at Renfrew Park south of Gerringong. The farm was purchased by the Miller family in the late 1830's. (Samuel Cocks photograph).

Source: University of Wollongong Archives



DAIRY, KIAMA DISTRICT

Family-operated dairy farms were integral to the economy of the Kiama district. For many years, the Australian Illawarra Shorthorn breed formed the basis of local dairy herds. (Samuel Cocks photograph).

Source: University of Wollongong Archives



COACHBUILDERS, KIAMA

Finlayson's coach factory was located in Terralong Street east of the Manning Street corner. (Samuel Cocks photograph).

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



MISS SWINDELLS SCHOOL, KIAMA

The Kiama Public and Convent Schools were supplemented at various times by small private academies. Miss Swindells opened her school in 1890 and conducted it at her home, Melrose, in Shoalhaven Street. Her pupils were mostly the daughters of local business owners. (Samuel Cocks photograph).

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



KIAMA SUPERIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1911

The Kiama National School operated from 1861 to 1867 in rented premises. In 1871 a single storey stone school was opened and by 1883 increased enrolments necessitated the erection of a two-storey building. From 1890 to 1916, the school was a superior public school offering primary and post-primary education.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.

meetings included hymn singing and recitation of poetry. By 1884, there were still 120 children on its rolls.¹⁵

Associated with temperance was education. The Protestant churches were again active in relating religious life to individual moral improvement. 'What prayer meetings there used to be. Eighty or a hundred or more would regularly assemble on Monday evening in the Kiama (old) chapel, and class meetings were an inspiration and a joy.' There was also a 'Young Men's Improvement Society' which held meetings where members read poetry and listened to lectures.¹⁶

By the 1850s, many in New South Wales had come to believe that only active state intervention could ensure the spread of liberal moral enlightenment through education. The schools under the National Board of Education were designed towards this end. Their curriculum was 'secular', which in the mid-nineteenth century essentially meant the teaching of the moral values of a common Protestant Christianity rather than the doctrine of a particular religious denomination. In June 1857, a public meeting had been held at Kiama to support the establishment of a school under the Board of Education. John Smith, foundation Professor of Chemistry at Sydney University and member of the National Board addressed the 'well attended' meeting.¹⁷

Some in Kiama, particularly groups associated with the Church of England, were reluctant to see the establishment of a national school. Throughout New South Wales, most of the Church of England laity, and many of the clergy, had moved away from the exclusivist position of Bishop Broughton who had opposed Bourke's national education scheme. In Kiama, however, the provincial rural nature of much of the parish and its close links with the position of the Church of England in Ireland seems to have led to a continuing firm commitment to denominational education during the late 1850s and early to mid 1860s. Others also lent their support. At a meeting called to oppose the establishment of a national education, a Presbyterian elder, Dr. Menzies, said that he supported the denominational system, which 'made the Bible a school book', although he was also most solicitous to see provision made for the education of the poor.¹⁸

In contrast, the promoters of national education in Kiama were only indirectly 'solicitous' to the further provision for education for the poor. Support for a national school came principally from the elite of the district, whatever their religious affiliation. The Grays, a prominent Anglican family, supported the scheme. The local patrons of the school would be James Poulton (Congregationalist), Samuel Charles (Church of England), James Robb (Presbyterian and owner of the Riversdale Estate), Daniel McDonald (Wesleyan), and John Hannahan (a prominent Roman Catholic acceptable to Protestant opinion). Support from such men was directly founded on the interests of their own social class.

With so many of their own children growing up, many of Kiama's elite were seeking some form of secondary schooling. Already, there were some private schools. A school for girls known as 'Rosebank Academy' 'established for the education of young ladies' offered French, Italian and music for a fee of fifty pounds per annum for board and basic education with accomplishments extra. In the mid-1850s, James Hustler an English immigrant, educated at private schools in Britain and Europe, opened Illawarra House Academy. One of the active supporters of national education, James Poulton, had his own son educated under Hustler: 'the improvement he had made convinced him of one thing, and that was, that the support of Illawarra House Academy was incumbent upon all those in the district who valued for their sons really superior education'. The Academy did receive some support from the elite of Kiama,

but it also charged fees apparently high for a provincial school and some parents still sent their sons to Sydney school. An answer to this dilemma lay behind the campaign for national education. In the words of one of its Klama's supporters, 'Grammar schools were much wanted at Wollongong and Kiama, and such schools could be readily engrafted on National Schools'. As in mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts, there was much irony in the campaign for educational reform in Kiama. A national school supposedly designed to serve all would be established to cater for the few.¹⁹

Kiama National School opened in 1861 as a non-vested institution. In the original application, the local patrons indicated that 55 boys and 35 girls were expected to attend the school of whom 25 would be Anglican, 22 Presbyterian, 20 Wesleyan, 12 Roman Catholic and 11 of other denominations. The teacher would be James Hustler, then aged 26, and his wife, Jane, aged 32. As a 'non-vested' school, the patrons would provide the school building, which they had leased from Hustler, while the school would come under the regulations of the Board and receive financial assistance (including books, material and rent subsidy). It was an obvious effort to allow Hustler to remain in Kiama and continue his school with state aid.

The venture failed. In just under a year, Hustler had left Kiama for Sydney. The National School had been established at an inauspicious time. On the New South Wales coastal seaboard between 1860 and 1863, there were floods, a drought and the final destruction of the wheat crop through rust. Mrs. Hustler had also been brought to court on a charge of assaulting a child in the school playground.²⁰

For four years from 1862 to 1866, the supporters of the National School in Kiama struggled to keep it open. Pressed by the Board of National Education to construct a school building (and so change its status to a vested school), the local board complained in 1863:

Places of worship have been completed in the town within the last few months as a subscription cost of between three and four thousand pounds (the Scots Presbyterian Church was completed in 1863 and the Methodist Church in 1862), and this local expenditure together with the late drought of which the settlers and indeed the community generally (sic) have not recovered would materially (sic) effect (sic) the subscription lists.²¹

Three teachers came and went in the space of four years. The last, Grenado Chapman, claimed in January 1866 that when he had arrived the previous March there were only 12 pupils in the school, excluding his own family of five, but that there were now 83 on the rolls, and attendance the previous quarter was £4.3. Chapman, however, met strong opposition from the local Church of England clergyman, who sought to draw children away from the school. The local board also seems to have decided to change its tactics over prospective clientele. The elite were obviously not attending the National School. Rose Bank Academy had continued under the direction of Hustler's sister, a new private 'select English and Classical Academy' for boys opened in March 1864 with fees of up to 5 guineas per quarter, and there were also prospects for at least two other grammar schools. To maintain enrolment, the local Board agreed that in consequence of hard times (there were more floods in 1864) 'the children of laborers, and of persons in indigent circumstances, will be taken at a considerably reduced school fee'. In March 1865, school fees were reduced overall to 9d per week for the first child in a family, reducing by a penny per child to 6d for the fourth child, while more than four children enrolled would be taught free. Rather than increased attendance, however, the result was a reduction in the income for the teacher who was also required to pay for the rent of the school building. After further disputes with the local board,

Chapman left in April 1867. The National school closed. The school materials were transferred to the Church of England school which had now re-opened. When inspected in January 1867, enrolment there had reached 58 boys and 21 girls. Until 1871, the Church of England school would remain the only public school in Kiama, operating under the Council of Education which had been established in 1866 to replace both the National and Denominational Boards.²²

Despite the failure of the National School to survive, the changes in both educational administration and the political climate helped revive the move to establish a public school for all children. Regulations under the Education Act of 1868, which had created the Council of Education, prevented the establishment of any new church school while existing church schools had to meet stringent enrolment requirements. The local patrons of the National school had now become the official Local Board under the Council of Education entrusted with the task of seeing to adequate provision in its area. It was also now required to provide an adequate school building, financing one-third of the cost of erection and furnishing. The Council agreed, however, to pay the two-thirds of the estimated 1,500 pounds required for a schoolhouse and teacher's residence. Through a series of public meetings and appeals to local industry the local Board set out to raise the extra 500 pounds.²³

What further aided the campaign for national education was a growing climate of united Protestantism in Kiama. The local member in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 1864 to 1870 was Henry Parkes. It was at Kiama on 24 August 1868 that Parkes chose to make his famous speech, alleging that an Irish Fenian conspiracy, involving also the death of one of the conspirators, lay behind the attempt of the Irishman O'Farrell on the life of the Duke of Edinburgh. Parkes obviously knew that he was speaking to an audience fearful of Catholic plots to overthrow the Crown. Even before his speech steps had been taken to form a volunteer Rifle corps in Kiama. By November 1870, when the Governor inspected the Corps, there were 130 men enrolled in three companies. The 'Kiama ghost' would continue to haunt the district for many years.²⁴

The feeling against Irish Catholics was reflected also in Protestant moves throughout New South Wales to end all aid to church schools. The campaign had much of its origins in Illawarra. In 1872, John Stewart, who had taken over from Parkes as local member for Kiama, called together a week-end meeting at Wollongong, to plan a campaign to overturn the Act of 1868. By June 1874, a Public Schools League had been formed with its leaders a Baptist Minister, James Greenwood, and an Irish-born Church of England Clergyman, Dr Zachary Barry. A branch of the League was formed in Kiama itself in October 1874.²⁵

Despite the new climate of anti-Catholic feeling, not all Protestants were in favour of abandoning denominational schools. The Church of England still maintained an active educational presence in the Kiama area in the late 1880s. Apart from the Kiama denominational school with its enrolment of approximately 80 pupils, there were smaller Church of England schools at Jambaroo and Gerringong with respective enrolments of at least 42 and 44. (There were also Catholic schools in both those centres with 51 pupils attending the annual inspection in Jambaroo and 22 in Gerringong). As a compromise with the new movement for national education, the Church of England in Kiama had agreed with a proposal that the local patrons take over its school and allow it to function as the 'public school' for Kiama. This arrangement, the Council of Education refused to sanction. In response, the local clergyman, the Reverend H. Baker, refused to attend the ceremony for laying the foundation of the new school.²⁶

I do not object to state schools, even to compulsory education; but I cannot approve of any system which has at the bottom, practical atheism ... The cry of the more violent of the Public School partisans confirms my view of the principle. They desire that the schools shall ere long be made 'wholly secular', an expression which justly interpreted means simply 'Having thrust God out of the schools let us turn his book out after him'.²⁶

This was a voice of the Protestant past. Those supporting the movement for a public school in Kiama argued that it was necessary on two grounds. First, with a young population growing up there was a need for continuous moral and other instruction for the children of the 'poorer classes'. At a meeting called in mid-1867, it was suggested that of children aged under 15 in Kiama township and its immediate vicinity there were 127 enrolled in day schools, a further 128 in Sunday schools only, but perhaps 200 who were receiving no schooling. (At the 1871 Census, there were actually 219 boys and 228 girls in Kiama and suburbs aged 5 to 14). Argued with equal force at the same meeting was the importance of establishing a grammar school to cater for the elite of the district. As one speaker noted, farmers even in outlying districts could then send their elder sons to Kiama 'as the capital of the district' to board during the week, returning home on Friday evening. To support this aim, it was agreed to seek a teacher 'qualified to give instruction in Latin and Mathematics'.²⁷

Built of stone, the Kiama school opened in April 1871. With an initial enrolment of 160, it soon became the major educational institution in the Kiama area. By 1874, the local inspector could report that the school was overcrowded with an average daily attendance of about two-thirds (approximate to the colonial average but under the Camden district average of 70%). 'Upon enquiring' it appeared that 'there are about twenty children of educable ages in the town and vicinity not under school instruction'. As in the Church of England school in the 1860s, there were consistently more boys enrolled than girls, while, reflecting the denominational breakdown in Kiama, the pupils were overwhelmingly Protestants.²⁸

From the beginning, the new school catered also for the elite. The first head teacher was the local member J.G. Stewart. As well as being a supporter of the principles of the Public School League, Stewart was a veterinary science graduate from Glasgow University. He would hold the parliamentary seat for Kiama in the Legislative Assembly from 1871 to 1874, while also being the head teacher at Kiama (at the same time he appears to have begun practising veterinary science in Sydney). Stewart took in boarders and prepared older students for the University examinations. After Stewart left, his successor, S.G. Bent, soon complained that parents expected him to teach Maths and Latin and that the success of the school apparently depended on entries to the university examination. He himself believed that he should receive extra remuneration, especially as many parents were able to pay for such tuition. He suggested at least a guinea a quarter in addition to the normal school fee of 6d a week for such tuition. In reply, the Council noted that it was not part of the role of a public school teacher to prepare students for the university examinations but that it had no objection to such a curriculum being offered provided it did not interfere with normal teaching, it did not approve or disapprove of extra fees but felt that in view of the situation of the parents, 'any remuneration be liberal'. Despite some protests, from the local Board, over increases to fees, the Kiama elite had virtually achieved what they had striven for: a grammar school financed in part through public funds. Although other public schools in the colony were also preparing students for the university examination, Kiama achieved more university examination passes than any other public school outside Sydney. It was a model of what regional schooling could achieve.²⁹

Kiama Public School
Attendance - 1871-75

| Year | Denomination | | | | | Totals/Avg Attendance | | |
|------|--------------|------|-------|------|-------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|
| | C of E | R.C. | Pres. | Wes. | Other | Boys | Girls | Total |
| 1871 | 94 | 18 | 68 | 41 | 1 | 137 (99.6) | 85 (80.0) | 222 (168.2) |
| 1872 | 106 | 25 | 68 | 49 | 1 | 140 (95.0) | 106 (86.0) | 246 (181.0) |
| 1873 | 103 | 23 | 64 | 55 | 1 | 148 (101.2) | 97 (80.8) | 245 (182.0) |
| 1874 | 104 | 22 | 62 | 51 | | 151 (107.8) | 88 (84.9) | 239 (172.7) |
| 1875 | 102 | 37 | 61 | 65 | | 158 (110.4) | 97 (81.0) | 265 (171.4) |

The figures in brackets indicate average weekly attendance.

Source: The annual reports of the Council of Education in New South Wales Legislative Council Journal.

Kiama Public School
Passes at the University Examinations 1875 - 79

| Year | Junior | | Senior | |
|------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| 1875 | 6 | 2 | | |
| 1876 | 7 | - | | 2 |
| 1877 | 2 | | | |
| 1878 | 5 | | | |
| 1879 | 8 | | | 1 |

Source: University of Sydney, Manual of Public Examinations.

For some males at least, growing up and being schooled in Kiama became a springboard for colonial careers. In time, Kiama would produce two early twentieth-century Premiers, Sir Joseph Carruthers and George Fuller, and a Chief Justice and later Lieutenant Governor, Sir William Cullen. Carruthers had grown up in the 1860s and had been schooled principally in Sydney and Goulburn. Fuller and Cullen, however, had both attended Kiama Public in the 1870s. A select list of 26 ex-Kiama Public School boys, compiled in 1888, did reveal at least two M.L.A.s, a barrister, solicitor, medical practitioner, five bank managers, three members of the public service, respectively in the Crown Law Office, Lands Department and the Mint, and an inspector of schools. All had studied under J.G. Stewart in the years 1871-74.³⁰

After 1880, the atmosphere at Kiama Public changed. With the passage of the 1880 Education Act, the newly created Department of Public Instruction imposed ever greater centralised control. Local boards ceased to exist. The Government now moved to establish fee-paying high schools in only the major regional centres of Bathurst, Maitland and Goulburn. Only one boy from Kiama Public passed the university examinations in the 1880s. By 1884, there was talk of reviving private schooling in the town by establishing a grammar school.³¹

The experience of the mass of children in Kiama Public was rather different from that of the elite. Most were dividing their time between attending school and helping out at home. Life was often hard. In class, the teaching was formal and conditions cramped as the school population continued to grow, reaching over 300 by 1879.

In the schoolroom three classes were generally taught side by side - the infants on a gallery with long seats but no desks, other classes with long desks and forms also arranged in gallery formation. Written work was on slates. It was necessary to have these slates thoroughly washed each week.³²

At home, there were jobs to be done before and after school. School routine was adapted to meet the requirements of farming. In March 1878, the head teacher requested permission to continue using an altered timetable schedule as 'so great many children are employed morning and evening in milking and some do not reach school until 10 o'clock and sometimes later and they are required to leave school at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, in order to reach home in time to assist in the work of the dairy.' Such practices particularly annoyed the educational authorities. Under the terms of the 1880 Act, a child living within two miles of a school was required to attend 140 days a year. In 1881, the local inspector noted that while only 43% of children aged six to fourteen in Camden County (of which Kiama was a part) who were within reach of a school were not attending, there was great irregularity amongst those who did attend.

There is still, however, much room for improvement in the regularity of attendance, especially during harvesting and other farming operations, when the elder pupils are kept at home for the sake of their assistance ... Another great cause of arrogance to the teachers and of loss to the pupils themselves is their want of punctuality in arriving at school, and their frequent withdrawal from school some half-hour before the close of the day's work. In this way many of the pupils, though fulfilling the letter of the law, do not attend for much more than half the time prescribed.³³

Increasingly, the authorities in Kiama and Sydney became impatient with those parents who refused to send their children to school. Editorialising on a report at Jambaroo of a 17-year old illiterate, 'brought up in the very midst of a populous and civilised community', the *Albury Mercury* of 4 March 1879 called for compulsory education and the condemnation of parents who allowed this situation to arise, even suggesting that the law should 'provide for a liberal application of the cat-o'-nine-tails to the backs of all such intellectual infanticides of fathers where found'. Obviously the memories of convictism still lingered on.

An attendance officer was appointed at Kiama in 1881 so as to ensure regular attendance and read the numbers on the rolls of Kiama Public. The move came not without opposition. One of the more articulate residents of Kiama expressed what were undoubtedly some of the feelings of many parents regarding compulsory schooling.

Its chiefest hardships are the early age [6 years] at which children are compelled to go; the number of years [8 years] to be sent; and the distance [all within a radius of 2 miles]. If compulsion is held to be necessary (I object) it should be restricted to town boundaries and to children of say the age of eleven years, who, if unable to read and write fairly well, might

be sent until they attain these accomplishments. Children will learn more and retain better from 11 to 14 years than in all years previous to that. Reading and writing fairly well is ample proficiency for ninetenths of the population. Surely it is not intended that the next generation shall be a conglomeration of quill drivers, eagerly hunting for Government sinecures, banker's offices, and the like. The numerous would be the appeals to other lands for food and clothing. Then again, Sir, picture to yourself the anxiety of a parent whose child, six years old, has to make its way through bush, and exposed, especially if a female to many perils on the lonely way. What recompence can the Government make if such a child perish through exposure to wet and cold, inducing deadly disease? Will it pay doctors' bills or funeral expenses? Another danger to such young children is that school study may induce premature development and consequent impairment of the brain. From this cause a child may grow up idiotic and become an inmate of a lunatic asylum. What can recompense the unfortunate parent?³⁴

It has often been suggested that irregular attendance was the result of parents needing either directly the labour of their children or the income it brought in, in both rural and urban districts. There was also the cost of school attendance itself: in New South Wales 3d per week for a child or 1/- for a family. There were provisions to waive the collection of fees on grounds of poverty but in 1883 the local teacher in Kiama could still nominate 33 parents for failing to pay school fees. Overall, throughout the 1880s the average weekly attendance at Kiama Public was consistently below the Camden district average of about 70% (in 1888, it was even as low as 61.4% (64.4% for boys and 58.1% for girls).³⁵

The resistance to regular attendance was understandable. It was really a continuance of past ways. Schooling was often regarded as a part-time activity which should take second place to helping out on the farm. In the 1880s some older residents of Kiama still remember their fathers' stories of going to school three days a week and ploughing on the other two. Overall, formal education had only an indirect relation to the work children performed at home. Nor did it provide much of a basis for employment on leaving school. In 1880, a petition was put forward for the establishment of an evening school in Kiama. Of the 21 applicants, all aged between fifteen and twenty three, one-third were unemployed but a further third were either skilled tradesmen or farmers. After one year, the teacher applied to close the classes, on the grounds that there were fewer than ten in attendance.³⁶

CONTINUING FAMILY TRADITIONS

By the late nineteenth century, Kiama was no longer a centre of an expanding immigrant population. After the high birth rates of the 1850s-80s, the population of Kiama district and the villages of Jambaroo and Gerringong failed to grow between the Censuses of 1871 and 1881. (Gerringong had become a separate municipality in 1871; Jambaroo would become so in 1890.) With so much of the good land taken up, descendants of the mid-century settlers began to think of moving out. Many were to leave the district to start farms and dairies along the Richmond River in Northern New South Wales. The growth of a blue metal quarry in the town itself helped change the composition of the work force. During the 1880s over 700 quarry men and navvies, often accompanied by their families, moved into the district to work on the quarry and help establish the railway link to Sydney. (Many were living in the 256 tent sites in Jambaroo municipality in 1891.) Some later moved on after the opening of the railway in 1888 or during the 1890s depression but others remained. By the early twentieth century, almost one-third of the male work-force in Kiama was working in the quarry.³⁷

Such changes help alter patterns of family and community life. By 1901, there were many single males in the town with one-fifth of men aged 35 to 44 not being married. The proportion of children in the population began to decline. Enrolment at Kiama Public School peaked at 370 children in 1883, the same year a new two storey addition was opened. Thereafter numbers declined generally throughout the 1890s. By 1901, less than one-third of the Kiama population was aged under fifteen. Three years later, the local inspector noted that the infants' school, opened in 1879 to accommodate 100 children, now had only 50 to 60 attending and that there were not many young children in Kiama. As elsewhere, smaller-sized families became the norm. By the 1920s, the demography of Kiama and its surrounding district would be very different from half-a-century earlier. While the townships's numbers had grown by 50%, total population in the district had actually declined by 10%, with the village of nearby Gerringong suffering a decline of over 40%. Equally significantly, the proportion of under fifteen year olds in the total population had dropped by almost half.³⁸

Despite demographic change, for most Kiama children in the 1890s and early 1900s, life was not so very different from that of 20 to 30 years previously. Average weekly attendance fluctuated between two-thirds and three-quarters of enrolment in the 1890s. A few children were still educated at home or received no instruction at all. Kiama had become a superior public school in 1890 capable of offering a form of secondary schooling. Yet, in 1896, school enrolment dropped by more than half between third and fourth grades with only 25 children going on to the non-compulsory fifth grade. The district elite now sent their sons to Sydney secondary schools (many of the Fuller family attended Sydney Church of England Grammar School opened in 1889). Other children attended Miss Swindell's, a local academy opened in 1889 and catering well into the twentieth century for boys as well as girls with an emphasis on bringing up young ladies and gentlemen.³⁹

Kiama
Education of School-Aged Children (8-14)
1891, 1901

| | Public School | Private | Denomi-national | At Home | No Instruc-tion | Not Stated | Total |
|-------------|---------------|---------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|
| 1891 | | | | | | | |
| Males | 150 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 8 | — | 179 |
| Females | 150 | 23 | 6 | 1 | 13 | — | 193 |
| 1901 | | | | | | | |
| Males | 115 | 7 | 30 | — | 6 | 4 | 161 |
| Females | 111 | 16 | 27 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 164 |

Source: Census of New South Wales, 1891, 1901.

In general, efforts were still made to bring up Kiama children in the imported values of the nineteenth century. In 1898, the local teacher had requested from the Department of Public Instruction a text book from which temperance lessons were given 'in order that I may comply with the regulations regarding the subject'. Twelve years later, in July 1910, the Secretary of the local Orange lodge protested

so the Minister of Public Instruction that the head teacher of Kilmarnock Public School had forbidden the wearing of orange to celebrate the Battle of the Boyne on the 10th of July. The teacher would be instructed to desist from his opposition to such prominent displays of 'loyalism'. In many ways Kilmarnock still remained a haven of its respectable Protestant and Northern Irish heritage.⁴⁰

CHAPTER 3

NINETEENTH CENTURY ILLAWARRA

LIFE IN A MINING VILLAGE

THE MINING FAMILY

While Kiama was at the southern end of the Illawarra region, Bulli was the northern part of the narrow strip of land between sea and mountain seven miles from Wollongong. It had been traversed by pioneers on the way to the Five Islands district after they had managed to descend the steep mountain side by the route that Captain Throsby had used. But while the town of Kiama was the urban centre and the port for the municipality and the electorate of the same name by 1861, Bulli was still a sparsely populated farming area. The development of the township of Bulli and the adjoining Woonona, were in response to the advent of coal mining which began in the northern part of the Illawarra range in 1857; by 1862 Woonona, Bellambi and Bulli were developing as mining villages.¹

Progress was slow in spite of the energy of the owners and the early stimulus given to coal production in Illawarra by a strike of Newcastle coal miners in 1861. The Woonona mine closed in 1863 because of the bankruptcy of its owner, due to the declining market and the expense of jetty construction. The company operating the Bulli mine was more successful, employing about 100 men throughout the 1860s. By 1881 there were 1628 people living in the Bulli-Woonona villages, increasing to 2578 in 1891. Bulli with 1362, Woonona with 1226. By 1901 when Kiama's population was 1769 with 378 habitations Bulli-Woonona had reached 2720 occupants of 638 dwellings.²

The enlarging of the Bulli-Woonona community came from brides or grooms moving in to join their marriage partners, the birth of children to those couples, and workers attracted by the hope of work, particularly as miners, they came from other districts in New South Wales, other parts of Australia and from overseas. The largest number of immigrants came from the British Isles; but whereas Kiama attracted newcomers from Ireland, the Bulli immigrants were English, Welsh and Scottish. Those who came from the coal mining districts of Britain to do the same work in a new area, brought not only their skills but also their traditions; these helped shape the pattern of life in the Illawarra mining communities.

Bulli was the scene in March 1887 of the worst coal mining disaster that Australian mining had known to that date. The 81 men and boys killed reflect some aspects of the community. Seventeen had

been born in and had grown up in the local region; another six were born elsewhere in New South Wales. One had come from Germany, two from Ireland, of the others, the large majority, 38, had come from mining areas in England, four from Wales and three from Scotland. Full details concerning fourteen of those killed were not known: some of these were unwanted strangers in the community; they had been brought in by the mine management to work while the local men were on strike. The defeated unionists had had to accept a return to work with the 'blacklegs'. All working at the time had died together. Sixty one of the victims, including the unknown, were buried at Bulli Church of England graveyard. Of the rest, eleven, some of whom were Methodists, were interred in Woonona's Presbyterian church ground and nine in the nearest Catholic burial ground at Corinal.³

Bulli Births 1881, 1891

(Birthplaces of parents)

| Birthplaces | 1881 | | | | 1891 | | | |
|-------------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | Mothers | | Fathers | | Mothers | | Fathers | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Australia | 34 | 53.1 | 18 | 25.8 | 30 | 61.2 | 26 | 54.6 |
| England | 18 | 28.1 | 28 | 45.1 | 13 | 26.5 | 11 | 22.8 |
| Scotland | 5 | 7.8 | 7 | 11.3 | 2 | 4.1 | 3 | 6.3 |
| Ireland | 4 | 6.3 | 3 | 4.8 | 2 | 4.1 | 3 | 6.3 |
| Wales | 2 | 3.1 | 2 | 3.2 | 1 | 2.0 | 3 | 6.3 |
| Other | 1 | 1.6 | 5 | 8.0 | 1 | 2.0 | 2 | 4.2 |

Source: Registrar General's Records.

Coal mining was the chief occupation, employing 20 per cent of the whole population in the 1880s. But there were many others necessarily involved in the work of maintaining the community. The 57 names listed by *Sands Country Directory* for 1884-1885 indicate that Bulli needed thirteen storekeepers, ten carpenters, five hotel keepers, two each of butchers, bakers and bootmakers, a senior constable, a school teacher and the Anglican clergyman, there were also the mine manager and other staff people and a few farmers. A small group was in railway construction, when completed in 1887 the railway would require the employment of many more workers.

The records of marriages and baptisms which took place at St. Augustine's Anglican Church in Bulli from 1881 indicate both the significance of mining as well as the diversity in the coal mining community.⁴

More than half the fathers of the Anglican children born in Bulli between 1881 and 1901 were miners. Some of those fathers were killed in 1887, leaving 37 widows and 120 children, 94 of whom were under 14 and therefore still dependent on their mothers or older members of the family. Four were illegitimate, all with the one father, now dead. Six of the widows were childless. Twenty one had had other children who had died; there were 40 of these, a death rate of 33 1/3 per cent amongst infants. Ten of the widows each had five or more children who had survived, one of them with nine children had actually had twelve pregnancies.

Bulli Church of England
 Births 1882 - 1901
 Occupations of Father (Parent)

| Occupation | No. | % |
|--------------------|-----|------|
| Mining | 285 | 56.3 |
| Farming | 13 | 2.6 |
| Professional | 9 | 1.8 |
| Commercial | 58 | 11.4 |
| Government Service | 25 | 5.0 |
| Skilled Trades | 45 | 8.9 |
| Unskilled/Domestic | 48 | 9.5 |
| Other | 23 | 4.6 |

Source - Parish registers of St. Augustine's Church of England, Bulli.

The wider community reflected in the statistics concerning baptisms registered at St. Augustine's church at Bulli is also represented in the records of marriage. Of the couples in the late nineteenth century in Bulli a higher proportion than those in Kiama were Australian born. This was particularly so in the case of the brides: 60 per cent were born in Australia, with a significant proportion apparently having grown up in the Illawarra. Of those born overseas most had come from England, with 4 per cent having been the children of miners in Durham and Northumberland.

Amongst the grooms there was a higher proportion of overseas-born but those of Australian birth still represented over one half. A much smaller proportion than in the list of victims of the mining disaster came from the English mining areas: only 3.5 per cent of all grooms; some, however, had grown up in the northern New South Wales coalfields. While 40 per cent of the grooms were themselves miners, only 16 per cent of their fathers were; the fact that one quarter of the grooms' fathers were deceased indicates the high death rate amongst miners. In contrast one quarter of the brides' fathers were miners and, like the grooms, a quarter of their fathers were deceased.

Significantly four fifths of both brides and grooms were living in Illawarra at the time of their marriage, almost half in the Bulli Woonona mining villages. By the 1890s the majority of the children born to these couples would be growing up in families where both parents had been born in Australia and had spent much if not all of their lives in the Illawarra region.

In a community based primarily on coal mining the work openings for girls were severely restricted. A small group of brides and their mothers before them had been dressmakers. Very few had the opportunity to be hotel keepers or teachers. The main occupation outside the home for women in New South Wales in the 1880s was domestic work. In Bulli there was little enough of that available, so girls would have to go further afield, which would mean living-in or boarding. It was not surprising that 80 per cent of brides and of the mothers of brides and grooms had had no paid occupation before marriage. The main expectation of the women of the mining community was therefore marriage and motherhood, nearly half the female population was married before the age of 21, over 70 per cent by the time they were 23. Eighteen and 21 were the most favoured ages for the girls to marry. In terms of the marriage

market, women were favoured in that they were outnumbered by men, there were 882 men and 788 women in 1881, 1417 and 1303 respectively in 1901. The work places of those killed in the dangerous occupation of mining were soon taken by men coming in from other areas which meant that if they were single or widowers they could become the grooms of the widows.

Bulli Church of England
Marrages 1881 - 1901
Birthplace of Grooms and Brides

| Place of Birth | Grooms | | Brides | |
|--------------------|--------|------|--------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| Australia — | | | | |
| Sydney | 15 | 10.5 | 10 | 7.0 |
| Illawarra | 29 | 20.3 | 54 | 37.8 |
| Newcastle | 7 | 4.9 | 3 | 2.1 |
| Other N.S.W. | 18 | 12.6 | 21 | 14.7 |
| Other colonies | 8 | 4.2 | 2 | 1.4 |
| Overseas — | | | | |
| England | 36 | 25.0 | 23 | 18.0 |
| Scotland | 5 | 3.5 | 3 | 2.1 |
| Ireland | 3 | 2.1 | 2 | 1.4 |
| Wales | 8 | 5.5 | 2 | 1.4 |
| Other | 2 | 1.4 | - | - |
| Not Known | 18 | 12.6 | 24 | 18.8 |

Source: Parish Registers of St. Augustine's Church of England, Bulli.

With the majority of males of working age employed in Bulli mines, the pattern of life for community and family was closely connected with the state of the coal trade, the relationships of the miners with their employer and the work process itself. The Bulli Coal Mining Company was usually the largest employer of miners in Illawarra. In 1880 when there were 754 miners in the district's four mines, 331 were at Bulli, in this year the company received 8/- [eight shillings] a ton for the coal it sold. Coal production increased, and the number of miners increased in the southern as well as in the northern and western districts until in 1901 there were over 12,000 men working in the industry, 2499 of them in the southern district, by that time there were 13 mines working in Illawarra. But in these years of growth the selling price of coal had fluctuated from 8/- in 1883 to 7/- ten years later, lower still after 1893 and throughout the whole decade, until recovery in 1901 when it was 7/4d [seven shillings and fourpence].⁵

The selling price of coal was of particular relevance to the wages of the workers who produced it. There was no regular weekly or fortnightly wage. Until after the second of the next century's world war the miners worked on contract, employed only when needed, paid only for what they produced after stones had been removed. When the owners' selling price dropped the workers' price too was lowered. Competition with the larger and longer established industry in the north stimulated the southern owners to sell their coal for a lower price than that prevailing in the northern districts: in 1880 for

example the Bulli Company sold for 8/- a ton while the northern owners received 9/6d. or more. The Bulli Company had another problem: where Newcastle was a safe harbour, Bulli's jetty was unapproachable when the seas were rough. The absence of ships meant that the mine did not work. So there was the problem for the miners of intermittency.

Working hard all day a miner could produce 3 tons of coal. At 2/9d. a ton, the rate in 1880, and with a full fortnight's work of eleven days, a miner could earn four pounds, ten shillings and nine pence, with a bit extra for the small coal weighed separately. In 1888, when the wage was lower, the average was from two pounds, two shillings to two pounds, twelve shillings a week. The Illawarra Mercury regularly reported the number of days worked at Bulli and the other mines in the southern district, often the news was that work was "full" or "slack". Sometimes it was half-time for as long as six months, particularly in the 1890s after 1893.⁶

Fortunately it was a period of stable prices, apart from seasonal fluctuations. Bread was 6d. a loaf, beef 2½ to 4 pence a pound, mutton about 3d., butter 1/-, cheese 8d., tea 1/6d., sugar 2d., eggs from 1/- a dozen, onions 3d. and potatoes 9d. for a hundred-weight (50.8 kilograms). These were the prices in Sydney; country prices were usually higher. The average consumption of potatoes in New South Wales was 4 pounds (1.8 kg) per week, rising when meat had to be left out of the diet.

Rents for the miners' dwellings varied. Some miners lived in company houses, the Woonona mine houses had been let for 10/- weekly before the mine closed, the Bulli Company charged from 5/- to 7½. If the mine workers built their own shacks on company land they paid sixpence ground rent. Many miners preferred to be independent from the company in their housing arrangements so they rented from other landlords who charged more or less than the company according to demand and the size of the house, the latter being an important matter for miners with large families. Some owned their own houses on their own land, often with mortgages to be repaid. From 1884 miners could get housing loans from the Illawarra Mutual Building Society. Other essential expenses included the charge made by the employer for tools and powder and light used at work. There was also a charge, sixpence a week, for coal used at home. An item separated from the domestic and work budget was the eighteenpence a week for the sickness fund and another threepence for union dues.

It can be seen that if the miner was able to work regularly and had few dependants he would be able to live on his income. If there were several growing children, if work was intermittent, or if the wage rate was lowered, there would be hardship. A threat to the wage rate usually caused industrial disharmony.⁷

THE EDUCATION OF MINERS

The education of the children in the Bulli Woonona area was first undertaken by the Anglican diocese. Even before there was a Church of England in the area a denominational school had been established in Woonona. By 1868 the enrolment was 104, 42 boys and 62 girls. In the absence of any other school the parents of all denominations sent their children to be educated; the majority, 46, were Church of England, but there were, too, 26 Presbyterians, 18 Wesleyans, 11 Catholics and 6 others. The average weekly attendance was 89. The nearest public school north of Bulli was over 2 miles away in the village which later became Ausinmer, at this time called North Bulli. The number of children attending this school, established in 1888 to serve the needs of the settlers in the district, was 44, 27 boys and 17 girls.⁸

A campaign for a public school in Bulli commenced not long after the mine was established. Significantly the impetus came from the mine management, of equal importance was the fact that the first mine manager, William Somerville, and his successor, Alexander Ross, were Wesleyans as were the majority of the miners at Bulli in the 1860s. The campaign for a non-denominational school was begun by Somerville in 1866 and continued by Ross, who organised a petition of 42 Bulli residents, 17 of whom were Wesleyans. In making the application to the government in 1868 for a public school for Bulli, Ross was able to offer a donation from his company of land valued at one hundred pounds and cash of fifty pounds, and another fifty pounds donated by himself and two other members of the mine management. He indicated his intention of sending his own children to the school if it were established, as did the other 38 parents of the 102 children residing in the locality. Of these 102 children, 43 boys and 59 girls, there were 44 Wesleyans, 12 Catholics, 11 Presbyterians and the rest, 36, were Church of England.

Objections to the establishment of the school came from the School Board at North Bulli and from Woonona denominational school, there was also a petition from 13 residents at Bulli, presumably Church of England. The objections were based on the fact that there were already two schools, both within a distance of two miles of Bulli. Alexander Ross, writing on paper with the Bulli Coal Mining Company heading, dismissed the argument concerning the closeness of the North Bulli school; it was indeed too far for children to walk, especially in wet weather when there was no proper road and they would have to travel over gullies and ravines through private property. In reporting on the counter arguments, the Inspector expressed his belief that there would be no need for another school at Bulli if the Woonona school were a public one, that because it was a denominational school it was not willingly supported by many of the residents, a fact which would ultimately lead to a wish for a public school in Woonona. The Council of Education agreed to the establishing of the school.⁹

Not expressed, but of concern to both the schools opposing the new one, was the matter of loss of income. The average income per child from school fees in the Church of England schools in New South Wales for the June-September quarter of 1868 was about 5/-, in the public school the fee was 8d. a week for the first child in a family, less for succeeding children. The income varied according to attendance. The Bulli school opened in June 1869, in the next ten years it grew from 82 to 199 as the following table shows.

Report on the Condition of Public Schools - Bulli

| | Number of Children on Roll | | | | | | | Average Weekly Attendance | | | |
|------|----------------------------|-------|-------|--------|----|-------|------|---------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Total | C of E | RC | Pres. | Wes. | Others | Boys | Girls | Total |
| 1870 | 40 | 42 | 82 | 38 | 7 | 10 | 27 | 2 | 25.2 | 26.7 | 51.9 |
| 1871 | 38 | 43 | 79 | 27 | 8 | 19 | 22 | 3 | 22.4 | 27.8 | 50.0 |
| 1872 | 42 | 38 | 80 | 32 | 7 | 16 | 20 | 5 | 30.0 | 36.0 | 66.0 |
| 1873 | 58 | 61 | 109 | 47 | 11 | 18 | 28 | 5 | 40.8 | 32.7 | 73.5 |
| 1874 | 44 | 57 | 101 | 39 | 12 | 22 | 23 | 5 | 31.1 | 38.0 | 69.1 |
| 1875 | 45 | 51 | 96 | 34 | 12 | 19 | 26 | 5 | 35.5 | 34.5 | 70.0 |
| 1877 | 49 | 53 | 102 | | | | | | 32.9 | 31.4 | 64.3 |
| 1879 | 109 | 90 | 199 | | | | | | 71.9 | 54.5 | 125.4 |

Source: N.S.W. Legislative Council Journal, 1880, Appendix 8

The table also reveals that the promise of 44 Wesleyan children had not been met. There were never more than 28 Wesleyans, and as few as 20 in 1872, possibly due to the movement out of the area in response to the dullness of the coal trade. In 1871, when Bulli did not work for a number of months. An increase in the number of men employed at the mine after 1878 was reflected in the rise of school enrolments in 1879. The attendance at the school in those years never rose above 70 per cent of those enrolled. By 1880 the number enrolled at the school had risen to 265 with a staff of four, a principal teacher, a female assistant and two pupil teachers - one a woman and one a man, both very young, about 18 years. Attendance at school still fluctuated. Of the 265 pupils in 1880 the average attendance was only 170.7. The following year saw a big drop in enrolments: at the beginning of April there were only 168 with an attendance of 140, rising at the end of the month to 187 with 149.6 as the average attendance of the 98 boys and 89 girls. The uncertainty of attendance and enrolment disturbed Mr. Bourke, the principal teacher, so much that he applied in October 1880 to be removed to another school with more settled population. He had been at Bulli for 2½ years.

During that time the average quarterly enrolment of the school has been 221 and 385 names have been added to the admission register: at which rates sufficient names would be added to the Register to renew the rolls in less than 18 months. This school was last examined on 4 November 1888. Since that time 103 names have been added to the Register while the last quarter was 185.10

It was the coming and going of the miners in response to employment at Bulli that caused the school enrolments to be unsettled. While schooling was not made compulsory until 1880 the attendance at Bulli still seemed erratic, with one third of the students absent in the last quarter before the Inspector's report of February 1880. There had been a strike over wages at the Bulli mine from 23 October 1888 to 3 January 1889. When there was a strike the parents could not afford to pay school fees so the children stayed at home or went with their parents to some of the exciting events associated with industrial disagreements.

Girls would be kept at home when the mother needed help with younger children or with the housework when she was sick or recovering from childbirth. In these circumstances not much could be done to enforce the compulsory rule. A number of parents were issued with summonses in May 1884 but absenteeism continued. If the children were attending school and fees were in arrears there was further danger of court action against the parents. One miner, with ten children, received a bill for arrears of fees and a threat of court proceedings in 1885. The Inspector reported that the father had a nice property and was earning good wages so should not be exempted. More mercy was shown when the hardship obviously was too great. One woman with four children and depending entirely on what she received from the relief fund of the union had the school fees cancelled in 1880. The widows of the miners killed in 1887 applied for and received cancellation of the fees. But the largest number of fee debts on the books were for people who had left the district.¹¹

The teacher had to worry about, as well as keep careful records of, all these matters while maintaining the standard of education expected by the Inspector in his annual visits. The reports related to four items, the material conditions of the school, moral character of the pupils, subjects taught and methods of teaching, and the proficiency of the pupils. Sometimes there was prompt response to the Inspector's suggestions, as for instance when he noted the need for fencing to separate boys' and girls' playgrounds. It took three years to get a water tank and even longer to add a kitchen to the teacher's



BULLI COLLERY DISASTER, 1887

An accident at the Bulli Colliery on 23 March 1887 killed 81 men and boys. It was the worst colliery accident in Australia's history and left 180 children fatherless.

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



BULLI, c1907

Main Road, Bulli south of Slackys Flat. The Roman Catholic Church and convent school were on the right past the bridge

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



MINERS' STORE, BULLI, 1890's

Jacob Glass opened a general drapery store at Old Bulli south of Slacky Flat in 1886. The store moved closer to the railway station in 1919.

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



BLACKBERRY PICKING, RIXONS PASS ROAD

Blackberries were introduced at Bulli as hedge plants in the 1870's. The bushes flourished and the berries were sent to jam factories in Sydney.

Source: Mitchell Library, Sydney.



BULLI BEACH

Jacob Glass with his fishing boat at Bulli. Fishing was a popular recreation as well as a means of supplementing the larder

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



MINE MANAGER'S RESIDENCE, BULLI

The wife and daughter of the Bulli Colliery manager, Alexander Ross, outside their home c1880. The house was located behind the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

Source: Mitchell Library, Sydney.



BULLI PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1871

The Bulli Public School was formally opened on 7 July 1869 on land given by the Bulli Coal Company.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.

residence and to have the school painted. The teacher's performance was usually praised though occasionally a comment on the need for stronger discipline was made. Regularly each year it was noted that no singing was taught; no explanation was offered. Nor did the Inspector make any written comments about the attendance of girls or boys.

In a mining village it was the education of boys that was at greater risk than that of girls. In the report of a committee of inquiry into the employment of children in the 1870s it was found that there were many lads between 13 and 15 years of age employed in the collieries. Their educational state, it was said, was of a "very primary character" and if they did not have education before they started work at the mine "they would not be likely ever to acquire any".

These lads were mostly employed above ground, the day's work began at 7 a.m. and finished at 5 p.m. with an hour off for their lunch. For their nine hours' work they received two or three shillings, though one witness said the wage varied from 1/8d to 5/- for the nine hours' work. Their work was mostly picking stones out of the coal as it passed over the screens. If they were underground they looked after the air doors controlling the ventilation; they were 'trappers' opening and shutting the doors as required. There were also boys acting as water boilers and, if they were strong enough, they could also be wheelers, looking after the horses pulling the skips of coal. Usually the boys underground had passed their fifteenth birthday.

Witnesses called before the committee expressed the view that the lads spent their spare time "in sport and gambling of one sort or another", that it would be well for the government to provide night schools and inducement for the boys to attend them. They did not consider the boys "so overworked as to disable them from attending to lessons in the evening three or four nights in the week".¹²

The teacher at Bulli public school, Mr. Todd, was one who expressed concern for the education of boys working at the mine. "Six months ago", he wrote in 1878, "18 young men waited on me in my classroom and requested me to teach them". He could not accede to their request because he already "had a class of 30 on the Sabbath". He had been repeatedly urged by parents to open evening classes for lads prematurely removed from school to work in the mine; he had remonstrated with young men for wasting their time in the billiard rooms at Bulli but he said "they excuse themselves, alleging the want of direction in better employment, which is partly true". He requested an assistant teacher capable of assisting with evening classes.¹³

Two petitions came from Bulli in 1880 calling for the establishment of an evening school, each with 17 signatures. The second one was supported by Alexander Ross and other leading townsmen. The school was established but closed in 1881 for lack of attendance. Five years later, however, another petition from nine labourers brought about the re-establishing of evening classes.¹⁴ Further evidence of the desire to provide education for the community in spare time from work was shown in the early establishment of Bulli Woonona School of Arts. The leading citizens of Wollongong had formed one in 1881. Bulli Woonona followed in 1883. By 1897 there were 500 books in the School's reading room and lending library, 344 books of fiction, 43 books dealing with morality, 32 with politics, 30 history and mythology and 21 geography and travel books.¹⁵

The early concern with self-improvement and education could be seen as having some connections with the mining industry and the values of both workers and employers brought from English pit towns.

In the 1840s the English fathers of a number of Bulli miners were members of the National Miners' Association, the coal miners' trade union, which was a strong advocate of education both for miners and their children. Many of the miners' leaders as well as the rank and file unionists were Primitive Methodists who educated themselves so that they could become lay preachers for their church and stump orators outside it. Those of the miners who were Wesleyans saw no inconsistency in combining their union principles with the evangelical aspects of Wesley's teaching. That is not to say that the Methodist Church was radical in its politics. It was just as conservative as any other part of the Christian church in its stress on subordination to authority. Primitive Methodism had broken away from the Wesleyan Church in 1810 because some of its working class members had not found it to be sufficiently democratic in regard to those allowed to preach. If Primitive Methodism was the church of the workers the Wesleyan was for the workers in the sense that it emphasised the need for meekness and obedience and the Puritan virtues of hard work and frugality. Some writers have seen encouragement given by mine owners in the north of England to the establishing of schools in coal mining areas as a determined effort of social control - by 1871 they were contributing over half of the money required for the upkeep of schools in the north eastern coal regions. The miners' children learned to read and write, they also learned to respect authority, to fear the results of disobedience, rebellion and laziness and to work hard and methodically without grumbling. Dissipation, gambling and drunkenness led to poverty; frugality, neatness and respectability would bring rewards both in this life and the life hereafter.¹⁶

These moral values, enshrined in the educational aims of English Methodists and mine owners in England were just as much at the heart of all elementary schooling in the Australian colonies, whether in denominational or public schools. There was a strong emphasis on the moral welfare of youthful workers. In the report of the committee inquiring into the employment of children in 1876, there was similar concern shown in the Inspector's reports on the Bulli school in the 1870s and 1880s, the Education Act of 1880, by which the New South Wales government introduced elementary, compulsory, free and secular education, had the same objects as had the educators of earlier years.

Methodism was well established in Bulli before the coal mine opened. It owed a great deal to the Somerville family, land owners and sawyers, whose house was used at first as a meeting place, when the congregation became too large it was George Somerville who made a barn available to be converted into a chapel. This was ready early in 1862 and became Bulli's first church.¹⁷ When the mine was opened 18 months later, on Somerville-owned land, it was William Somerville who became the first manager. Primitive Methodism began in Bulli in 1867. It was not surprising that miners with a Methodist background in England should be attracted to get work at Bulli. Nor did unionism disturb the relationship between Alexander Ross who followed Somerville as mine manager; the first attempt at unionism was not made by the miners until 1879. So in the early years of Bulli's growth Methodism was one of the unifying forces in the community, reflected in the support for the school and its Board, of which Alexander Ross was a member.

All the churches played a large part in the lives of the Bulli people and their children. Their role was not only in the organisation of the observance of the Sabbath and as centres for weddings, christenings and funerals, they also arranged a busy programme of week evening functions. They gave their patronage to events ranging over the fields of moral improvement, education, culture and entertainment. The churches of Methodists, Primitive Methodists and Anglicans, whose church was opened in 1882, were joined in 1886 by the Salvation Army, and in 1888 by the Catholic College of St. Joseph, in providing these varied attractions for the community's leisure time.

A picture of Bulli life in the seven years from 1883 to the end of 1889 can be seen in the journal of William Wynn, miner, family man and church goer. He was born in Bilston, Staffordshire, in 1846 and was married in England in 1868 to Maria, a young Staffordshire woman of 19. They came to Bulli in 1879, their son John Thomas, aged sixteen in 1887, was killed in the Bulli mine explosion. The family attended the Methodist Church until John Thomas was 12. His father then resigned and joined the Primitive Methodists, perhaps because as a unionist he was engaged with the other miners at Bulli in a dispute with their Methodist manager Alexander Ross. Maria had a daughter who died at five weeks, and gave birth to another child a month before the explosion killed the son.

William wrote very little about his personal life and its deep tragedies, his comments being mostly concerned with work, community matters and the churches' activities. All of these are recorded; obviously he did not confine himself to the one church, and as he liked to hear concerts he attended those given by all the church groups, including St. Joseph's children's choir as well as visiting choral societies. There were picnics organised especially for the children by the churches, there were other day-time outdoor functions which included entertainment for children: the miners had picnics, combined with speeches, from 1886. Temperance bodies also were active from 1884, with picnics and evening parties for children as well as other functions for adults. In 1885, 200 to 300 women attended a function organised by the Women's Blue Ribbon temperance group and two years later there was an active Band of Hope in Bulli. Circuses came quite often to the town, as many as four in one year. Then there was the beach which was always available for a free treat, with exciting extras like the wreck of the *Waratah* a short distance from the Bulli jetty in 1887. In the same year there was the dreadful excitement of the Bulli explosion, a holiday for the children on the occasion of the Queen's jubilee with a special function at which they all received medals; they all went along too to the celebrating of the completing of the railway line and to the opening of the new jetty at Bellambi, when a bullock was roasted on the beach.

For the young ones who were old enough to be out in the evenings there were many opportunities to attend functions arranged by the churches and temperance societies. A popular form of entertainment for the churches was a public tea meeting in the church hall, sometimes with a speaker. The Anglican clergymen organised a young men's mutual improvement class which held debates. In 1888 there was a debate with the Young Men's Christian Association on the subject "Why we should uphold the restriction of Chinese into the colony". "The vote for restriction or expulsion was carried by a large majority", wrote William Wynn. There was a "full house", he reported, at an "Electric Circus", magic lantern evenings were popular, though one held in 1887 seemed "a tame affair" to an adult like William Wynn.

Adults and young alike appreciated concerts and general entertainment which included recitations, singing and some sedately humorous items. At one of these, held in the Oddfellows' hall on a Saturday evening early in 1888, "when a gentleman appeared on the stage to sing, the greater part of the audience left the hall as he was a blackleg", commented the unionist. The strike at Bulli which had so quickly been followed by the disaster at the mine had left better memories. Even in the churches there could be no Christian forbearance for those who worked in the unionists' places during a strike. Unionists had walked out of the evening service both at the Wesleyan and the Primitive Methodist churches because of the presence of blacklegs in the congregation. Particularly in the case of the Primitive Methodists betrayal of the union cause would also have seemed like betrayal of their church. No other disharmonies occurred in the life of the church. Bulli people seemed to have a broad range of Christian interests. The Methodists had an "aboriginal mission" on one occasion; on another a Tongan clergymen preached with his wife acting as interpreter; at the Primitive Methodist anniversary in 1888 a woman, Mrs. Davies, was the

special visiting preacher and she presented not one but three sermons. The Anglican Church early in 1888 had a united prayer meeting in preparation for the anniversary of the Disaster.

Apart from the church services each Sunday and church bazaars and team meetings, the Bulli community had such a variety of other occasions offered for their interest and entertainment that it would have been very difficult to attend them all. In the 23 entries in William Wynn's diary for 1889 there were at least 30 events that he thought important enough to record, and these included public political meetings as well as entertainments. Most seemed to have a "full house". Of course there were regular sporting events too, though never on Sundays. Cricket and the winter sports were popular at Paffier's grounds, the venue also for the ten mile race held in May. A skating rink was opened in nearby Woonona in 1889 which Bulli people visited either to skate or to watch the skaters. Only rarely was a trip to Wollongong made. Seven miles over bad roads was not a journey to be taken lightly even if horse and vehicle were available. Most of the Bulli families did not have such transport. So except for its links with Woonona, Bulli was an isolated place. Its self-sufficiency tightened the bonds of the community and helped establish the conformity of its members to the customs of a mining village.¹⁸

SURVIVAL OF THE FAMILY

In the twenty years between the 1881 and 1901 censuses Bulli Woonona grew considerably in population and size of the township, Woonona rather than Bulli. In 1881 there were 301 houses for the combined population of 1628, an average of 5.4 for each house; this was about the same as the situation in Wollongong but higher than in Kiama. By 1891 the Bulli Woonona population was 2578 and the villages further north, Robinvale (later Thirroul) and Clifton had appeared in the census with about 450 inhabitants each. By 1901 Bulli had a total of 982 and Woonona 1758, with a growth in the number of houses, for the combined population, of 535. Meantime while the mining villages of Clifton and South Clifton had also grown, the other northern villages of Thirroul and Austinmer were dwindling in size.

The houses in Bulli Woonona in 1881 were mostly weatherboard: 201 of the 301 dwellings whatever their size had been made of timber, filled and sown locally. There were 42 brick or stone houses, 58 slab or inferior; some of these were old company dwellings, some were shacks erected by the miners themselves. Nine of the 301 dwellings were uninhabited at the time of the census. Miners occupied most of the inferior structures; many lived in weatherboard houses, and a few occupied brick houses which they rented.¹⁹

The size of the house occupied did not depend on the size of the family. Many families lived in houses of three rooms. The parents occupied one bedroom, the children were squeezed into the other and the third room was used for cooking, eating, ironing, sewing, reading - sometimes even for bedding-down older members of the family. There was no kitchen. There might be a stove but often the cooking and water-heating had to be done on an open fire, with bars on which utensils rested, or a hook from which they hung over the fire. Clothes washing was done with copper and tin tubs in an outhouse at the back of the house, sometimes even out of doors. In these cramped, primitive conditions, with an uncertain budget, the women raised her children and cared for her husband.

His day started early since he had to walk up the hill to the mine then through the tunnel to start his work at 7 a.m. At crib time he would eat the food and drink the bottle of tea brought from home in the morning. At the end of the day's work he would walk home, black with coal dust. There were no

facilities for bathing at the mine. His wife would have hot water ready for his bath tub and an early evening meal, after which the miner might go to a meeting of the Oddfellows' or Foresters' Lodge. These were the benefit societies to which a miner would pay 8d. weekly and receive sickness or injury benefits for himself and help for his wife in the event of his death. His was a dangerous occupation and government welfare measures were matters for the future.²⁰

Newcastle miners formed a union in 1880, but while there were several strikes in the south about wages in the 1880s and 1870s, and although the Newcastle unionists offered aid, industrial harmony was regained without unionism. When a union was formed in the south in 1879, it was through the action of the Bulli men and the impetus came not from a wages matter but a political one. The Sydney Seamen's Union was on strike late in 1878 over the use by the Adelaide Steam Navigation Company of Chinese seamen in their crews, with lower wages than the Seamen's Union rate. The Seamen's Union resistance had much public support; it was a popular issue, given the anti-Chinese feeling in the colony, and Illawarra people like those elsewhere gave financial support. The Bulli miners decided to go further. Early in January 1879 they decided not to produce coal for ships carrying Chinese in their crews; at the same time they established a union and called on the other miners in the district, Mt. Keira, Mt. Pleasant and Coalcliff to join them. A joint meeting agreed. The managers at Bulli, Keira and Mt. Pleasant reacted in alarm, putting up notices to say that no unionists would be employed. Bulli owners in Sydney endorsed Mr. Ross's action and instructed him to take on all non-unionists offering themselves for work. The Bulli union delegate, William Wynn, replied

This is not likely to affect the determination of the men; they will try to find shelter on the mountain if they are turned out of their houses ... Miners receive 8/- or 10/- a day, wharf labourers and builders 1/- an hour. Considering the risk of life and limb and the injurious air a miner breathes with the reductions for tools sharpening, tallow etc, to be taken from 10/- or so, I think it none too good.

The *Illawarra Mercury* which reported Mr. Wynn's statement and all the other news about the "Bulli difficulty", showed sympathy with the position of the locked-out men. They were not paid wages owing to them and some were evicted from company houses. Some who had not joined the union went to work, much to the indignation of the unionists. A band of 200 of them marched to the Bulli Jetty and stopped a few non-unionists working there. Mr. Ross wired to the company in Sydney who responded by sending 25 police and an inspector to Bulli. The *Mercury* considered "this invasion of the police a grave mistake".²¹

Widespread support for the men and the rumour that the steamship company was considering getting its coal from Newcastle helped bring the dispute to a satisfactory conclusion before the end of January. The company recognised the right of the union to exist and promised to pay back wages while the union undertook not to interfere in the company's management and the disposal of coal. By July the Illawarra Miners' Protective Association had 500 members and held what it hoped would be an annual event, a procession and speeches followed by a picnic for all miners' families.

While unionism survived at Bulli it faltered at the other mines and the district association did not survive an unsuccessful strike in 1880 over a reduction of 6d. per ton in the wage. The Bulli men by negotiation won 2d. of that back in 1882 when the owners' price had increased. In August 1886, a month after the district union organisation had been re-formed, the mine owners' association gave

notice of a new reduction in the wages. The owners in Newcastle had formed an association earlier and the Illawarra owners, always at a disadvantage in relation to the north, obviously feared the revival of unionism in the district. The union decided by 588 votes to 13 to refuse to accept the reduction in wages and the strike that followed lasted from early September to the middle of February 1887. There were many evictions from company houses which were occupied instead by "free labourers" brought from Sydney under police protection to work in place of the unionists.²³

This conflict was like the 1878 affair in that it developed into the right of the unions to exist, but it was longer and caused more bitterness in the community. There was too a new development, one which would have far-reaching effects on the traditions of mining villages, the women became involved in the efforts to persuade the blacklegs to leave. Forty of these arrived by boat at Bulli Jetty in mid January 1887. Over 300 miners and 160 women had been assembling on the beach from 3 a.m. and when the free labourers boarded the company's coal wagons the crowd rushed to the railway crossing on the main road to form a blockade. The women were at the front when the engine stopped close to them. Then they rushed to the sides of the wagons, many with their babies in their arms, and pleaded with the men not to take their husbands' jobs and starve the children. Of these men, 36 surrendered and the remaining four were returned to the jetty, followed by the women who persuaded them to go away. All were helped to return to Sydney. There was a repetition of the action a few days later when 18 police guarding six free labourers had to baton their way through the crowd, mostly women, to disperse them. Women at Kiama were involved in a similar campaign.²³

When the strike ended the men returned to work on the owners' terms. This meant in the case of Bulli that the names of married men and boys had to go into a ballot for the chance of resuming work with the blacklegs retained by the company. Some of the unionists who were lucky enough to get their jobs back were amongst those killed in the explosion which occurred at the mine after it re-opened. It was closed again until May. But there were some of the unionists, including William Wynne, whom the company refused to re-employ for most of the year. Those so victimised continued to receive financial support from the union, which with the aid of donations from the public and other unionists in New South Wales, had paid 30/- a fortnight to families in need during the strike. The children would have been well aware of the sacrifices made by their parents on behalf of unionism: meat disappeared from the diet, bread was made of polland, a fine bran usually made into mash for ducks; school fees could not be paid so the children stayed away and would have seen for themselves the campaigns of both their fathers and mothers against the blacklegs. They would have heard too their parents' and older brothers' discussions about the union, the strike, the disaster, the Bulli Company's refusal to take back the old hands. Some of them would never forget the disaster because their own fathers had been killed; sometimes their widowed mothers were grieving as well for a son or a brother killed.²⁴

Immediate action was taken to provide financial help for the families of the victims of the Bulli mine explosion. All the mining lodges helped, as did unionists elsewhere. The government of Henry Parkes gave official support to a public fund and established a Board to distribute the money after investigating the needs of those bereaved. A sub-committee interviewed 82 people and in most cases gave up to five pounds for immediate relief. The interviewing group also gave advice, strongly recommending "those who have no connections in Bulli to get away into other parts of the Colony as soon as possible as it is not desirable that so much suffering and dependence should be concentrated in so small a place".

Some of the interviews with the 82 'cases' contained in the report of the Board's work reveal the hardship in the lives of the unionists' families.

Case 3

Widow states:- My late husband was 41 years of age, and my own age is 36. He was eight years in the district, and earned two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence per week. I have five children, aged 12, 11, 9, 1 and 6 years. None of them earn anything. The school girl, 11, is very delicate. I have a few pounds, which I have to pay for interest on the price of my ground; its price was sixty-six pounds, and I have paid fifty-two pounds ten shillings. I owe five pounds fourteen shillings for the timber. I have 2 acres of ground. I owe one stonekeeper nine pounds. We built this house after the strike, because we had to leave our place at the time. I have no friends that can help me. I got one pound, three pounds two shillings and sixpence from Mrs. Durham, grocer, &c., and six pounds five shillings for mourning, also twenty-five pounds from the Oddfellows.

(This was a very tidy place, but very small for five children. Gave her five pounds)

Case 4

The widow had been recently confined, and was in bed.

The father states:- Deceased was my son. He was 20 years old, and had lived in the district all his life. His average earnings were about two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence per week. There are two children, 5 and 2 years old, besides the baby. The health of the family is pretty good. I do not think that my daughter-in-law intends to leave the district. She has had groceries, meat and four pounds for mourning. She has had twenty-five pounds from the Oddfellows, and fifteen pounds from the Bull and Bellambi Benefit Society. I put up this house for my son, and hold the deeds, because there is still a balance of about sixty pounds owing to me by him upon it. I did not charge him any interest.

(This was a very neat and tidy place. Gave her four pounds)

Case 5

Widow states:- My late husband was 22 years old. He has been here all his life. He earned twelve pounds twelve shillings and sixpence a week. My age is 21 years. I have three children; one is 2 years and 9 months, another 1 year and 9 months, and a baby a fortnight old. The house is my own and free. I have had groceries from the store. I got one hundred pounds from the Australian Widows' Fund. I do not know how my children and I are going to live. I am not fit to work. My husband was a good man. I got three pounds sixteen shillings for mourning.

(This woman was very bitter against the Company)

Case 6 — (Special)

Widow states:- My late husband was 45 years of age. We have been in the Colony only eleven months. He earned two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence a week. Our troubles began when we came

to this country. We were in quarantine for five weeks, the whole of which time I was separated from my husband. I have seven children, 18, 16, 13, 11, 8, 5, and 2 years, and expect another. My age is 45 years. We came from England. We have nothing to live upon. I do not know what I can do for a living. I have not a half-penny at the present time, but I think twenty pounds would cover all I owe. My eldest daughter will have to go into service as soon as my trouble is over. One of my sons (16) earns three shillings a day in the mine. We pay four shillings a week rent. I am solely dependent upon the charity of the public. My husband was only two months in the Colony when the strike commenced, and we have lived upon twelve shillings and one pence a week since. We brought all our children out with us. The Company is quite willing to give my son work. I have received two pounds, groceries, &c., three pounds from Mrs. Durham, and six pounds fifteen shillings for mourning.

(N.B. - This was an exceedingly hard case, the worst that the Sub-Committee had then seen. The place was very tidy, and the children looked neat and clean. Gave her six pounds).

Case 7

Widow states:- I lost a husband and two sons in the mine. My husband was 39 years old, and I am 33. He was born in the district. I have six children, 13, 11, 8, 3, and 5 years, and a baby a fortnight old. We enjoy pretty good health. My husband earned two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence a week. I received only two pounds relief, four pounds from Mrs. Durham, and provisions. I got six pounds fifteen shillings for mourning, also twenty-five pounds from the Oddfellows for my husband.

Case 10

Widow states - My late husband was 34 years of age, and I am 33. We have been about nine and a half years here. He earned about two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence per week. He never lost any time when he had a chance to work. I have four children, all at school, and expect another. They are all healthy, but one of them is blind. There is one hundred and one pounds owing to the bank on this property. That sum would clear it. My husband borrowed one hundred and one pounds from the bank, he had no chance to pay it off, because the strike interfered. The house might fetch one hundred and fifty pounds. I have nothing whatever - not a farthing, and not a friend in the Colonies. I could not have been left in a worse state, as I own so many bills, and we were in debt before the strike. We were almost naked through the strike. We got into the tradesmen's debt forty six pounds during that time. I had to get a few things for myself and the children. My husband had a lot of friends in England, and I would like to go back there for the children's sake, but all those friends are poor. My father has to go on crutches, and was turned out of the hospital, incurable, two years ago. I got one pound relief, groceries, &c., and five pounds fifteen shillings for mourning. I have had twenty-five pounds from the Oddfellows. I do not enjoy good health.

(This was a very tidy place. Gave her five pounds)

Case 13

Widow states:- My late husband was 38 years old. He had been working two years in the mine, and earned two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence a week. My age is 34, and I have two children, a delicate baby 5 months old, and a little girl aged 7 years. My rent is paid by the local committee - I have no

relative here, and if anything should happen to me there would be no one to look after my children. I have friends in England, but I do not expect them to support me. I would like to go to England, but not yet. I have received groceries as I wanted them, also one pound ten shillings, and three pounds twelve shillings for mourning. I get plenty of food, but no money. I have not a shilling or a penny. I was living in a tent with 2 feet of water in it when the disaster happened. My husband did not belong to any society. I have lost a good husband. I have no relative belonging to him.

(Gave her three pounds)

Case 15

Widow states:- My late husband was 33 years old, was here nine years, and earned two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence. I have three children, 8, 8, and 3 years, and buried two during the strike. I have a small allotment at Wollongong, and have the deeds. It is free. It is 40 ft. frontage. I do not know its value. There is no house upon it. My husband gave sixty pounds for it. It is the only piece we have. The night before his death he asked Armstrong to buy it, but I persuaded him not to - that is, not to sell it. We were turned out of the house, but allowed to come back again. We put up the house, enlarged it, and made it comfortable. I have no money now, and if the supplies were stopped I should be in want. I cannot tide over the next two or three weeks, unless I have help, without spending the money I put by for a tombstone for my husband's grave. My health is pretty good now. I have had provisions, four pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence for mourning, and thirty-eight pounds from the Oddfellows. I kept some of the money for a tombstone for the grave. I owe Turnbull something, but not three pounds. I owe for boots. I paid eight pounds to the undertaker for burying the children, and other bills.

(This was a very tidy place indeed. Gave her three pounds)

Case 16

Widow states:- My husband was 34 years of age, and I am 33. He was about nine yrs in here, and earned about two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence a week. He always worked hard. I have four children, aged 8, 8, 4, and 2 years, and expect another shortly. The house belongs to me, and is paid for. My health is good. I got two pounds from Mrs. Durham, provisions, and five pounds ten shillings for mourning. I got my groceries from my sister-in-law, and have paid my money away. I have only a few pounds. I owe five pounds nine shillings, and for two pairs of boots. If I can manage it, I will stay here. I do all my own sewing. If I could get a mangle, I might find work when things are better. I received twenty pounds from the Farmers' Society.

(The place and children were exceedingly tidy. Gave her four pounds)

Case 20

Father states:- We lost two sons - John 18, and Thomas, 14 years of age - both born in the district. They earned four shillings and two shillings a day respectively. They had been working for a few weeks. I used to work at Bulli mine, but have been out on strike for nearly nine months. I shall stay here and try to get occupation. When in work my average earnings were thirty shillings a week. My health is pretty good. We got some supplies from Mr. Palfoster, and paid for them. Mr. Fry came and told us to

get groceries, and we got a pound's worth. We got two pounds from the Government, and two pounds five shillings from Mrs. Durham, for mourning, &c. The place we are in is only temporary, and we have been here ever since the strike. My subscription to the Foresters ran out during that time. I have five young children here.

(Gave them three pounds)

Case 36

Guardian states:- The deceased was 43 years old, had been here twelve years, and earned two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence a week. He left four children, aged 18, 11, 13, and 2 years. I and my wife adopted one of them several years ago. It is nine years since their mother died. I am taking charge of them. I have known them for many years. They are in no immediate distress. Their father was greatly in debt; I think thirty-five pounds would cover all he owed. I received four pounds from Government for mourning for them. I am Secretary of the Oddfellows, and they will get twenty-five pounds from that Society. My eldest girl is since married.

Case 64

Mother states:- My late son was in his seventeenth year, born in the district, and earned about four pounds in a fortnight. He was as good a working lad as there was in the pit; he always gave all his money to me. He took what I gave him and never said a word. I was dependent solely upon him. My husband is still on strike. He could have gone back before the strike was settled, but would not. I have always tried to keep my family respectable, and sent my children to school. I think fifty pounds would pay all that I owe. It is neither through drink nor mismanagement that we have become reduced in circumstances. I have four children going to school, and my eldest daughter is also with me. My health and their own is delicate. I got two pounds five shillings for mourning, and groceries to the value of one pound nine shillings. All other provisions I have received I have paid for*. We get fourteen shillings a week from the Union. We have done with as little as we possibly could. We pay nine shillings a week rent, and want to get some boarders.

(Gave her two pounds)

(*On inquiry at Mr. Pallister's it was ascertained that the items charged for were not strictly "necessaries").

Case 65

Widow states:- My last husband was 28 years old, I am 38. He was my third husband, and my second was also killed in this mine. He had been only three years here, and earned two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence a week. There are three families in this house by my respective husbands - ten altogether, their ages being from 16 years to three weeks, and none of them is earning anything. There are 2 acres of ground here, 1 belonging to me, and the other to my husband. This house stands on his acre. The ground cost one hundred and twenty pounds. My husband was offered one hundred for the house and 1 acre. We paid for putting up the house. I mortgaged my acre for fifty pounds to a building society, and have repaid nineteen pounds of that money. There is fifty five pounds due to Mr. Pope, and two pounds four shillings for interest. There is eighteen pounds fourteen shillings owing to the

bank in Bulli for timber. I borrowed nine pounds from Mr. John Wynn, to help pay for building the house, and I owe that still. I owe money to tradesmen, but the bills have gone in to the lawyer, who is applying for letters of administration for me of my husband's estate. I suppose I owe the storekeepers about thirty pounds. Altogether, I think I owe one hundred and twenty-one pounds. I have no means of support except this house and ground. I have no friends that can help me, and no money. The house and land are not worth much now. I got three pounds from Mrs. Durham, provisions and seven pounds ten shillings for mourning. My husband was not in any benefit society. My health is tolerably good.

(Gave her five pounds)

Source: Report Bulli Mine Disaster Fund, 28 May 1880 in N.S.W. Legislative Council Journal 1880/8.

Children who were aged 5 or more in 1880 would have had their impressions of mining family life reinforced in 1890, when another long dispute part of the Maritime Strike, reproduced even more dramatically the events of the earlier clash with the employers. The disaster which followed the 1890 strike was not caused by a mine explosion. It was the depression of that decade, which for Bulli miners meant lower wages, more intermittency and greater hardship until some recovery occurred in 1901. Overall the numbers of miners employed in the coal mining districts of New South Wales began dropping after 1891, until in 1895 they were lower than in 1888. But the dangers of the occupation did not become less as the following extract from the census of 1901 indicates.

Persons killed and injured in coal and shale production in N.S.W.

| | Killed | Injured |
|------|--------|---------|
| 1893 | 13 | 45 |
| 1894 | 7 | 40 |
| 1895 | 10 | 47 |
| 1896 | 24 | 62 |
| 1897 | 16 | 63 |
| 1898 | 25 | 69 |
| 1899 | 10 | 54 |
| 1900 | 24 | 101 |
| 1901 | 17 | 117 |
| | | 26 |

By 1901 the children of the Bulli community were entering on marriage and parenthood for themselves. Their experience would be much the same as those of their parents. The pattern of life in Bulli would be enlarged but it would reproduce the traditions of the community laid down by the nineteenth century miners and their families.

CHAPTER 4

TWENTIETH CENTURY ILLAWARRA

BEFORE THE WAR

THE COMING OF INDUSTRY

At the end of the nineteenth century Wollongong was the commercial centre of Illawarra, the main town in a region which stretched from Stanwell Park in the north to Kiama in the south. While its population increases did not match those of the rapidly growing Bulli Woonona its role as the main town always reflected the developments both in Illawarra and the wider Australian community.

There was an expansion of this role in the 1880s, the impetus coming from the prosperity of the coal industry in a flourishing economic period that all the Australian colonies experienced. In the new century coal mining brought other industries and ultimately a steelworks into the rural environs of Wollongong. By 1898, the industrial expansion was transforming the garden of New South Wales into a major industrial area.

The 1880s can be matched with the 1980s as a period of vital change and development. The number of mines increased to ten; Wollongong and Kiama were connected with Sydney by rail; the population grew; Wollongong's busy port Belmore Basin became inadequate for the size of the ships and the volume of shipping; buildings flourished. The town's population had stood still for over ten years after 1881. By 1880 it had risen sufficiently to create a housing shortage: there were 1,287 people in 1871, 1,835 in 1881. Ten years later the population was 3,051.¹ A group of Wollongong's leading citizens decided in 1880 to help solve the housing problem by founding the Illawarra Mutual Building Society. As the *Illawarra Mercury* reported in February, a crowded and enthusiastic meeting welcomed the benefits the society would bring to the public and especially to struggling and industrious men. Membership of such a society would induce habits of frugality it was hoped. It was decided to keep membership fees and borrowing charges sufficiently low to attract persons with small incomes, such as servants, youth and others. The 'others' included miners at Bulli and elsewhere. Women were allowed to join though married women could not have housing loans in their own right, (for many years the laws of New South Wales required the written consent of husbands for such transactions). The I.M.B. proceeded cautiously and successfully. It did not get its own building until 1930; but it weathered the depressions of the 1890s and the 1930s. Overall, it helped lay the foundation for families to buy their own homes.²

Another society which appealed to workers and their families in the 1880s was the Co-operative Society. Starting in Mt. Kiera in 1886 it gradually established stores in all the mining centres with an emporium and large bakery in Woonona and finally a large emporium in Wollongong (in 1938). The "co-op" allowed credit to their members during hard times and were paid back when the times were better. It was not bad debts but the advent of supermarkets after the second world war that would bring about their end.³

While the I.M.B. was helping in the building of houses the 1880s saw the construction of some fine substantial buildings. The new Methodist Church was followed by the public school in Smith Street, the new Courthouse in Market Square, the Town Hall and council chambers on the corner of Crown and Kembla streets on the site of Governor Bourke's National school. The I.M.B. was able to have an office in the council building for a while. Crown Street became busy: the first bicycles appeared to share the road with men on horses and horse-drawn drays, carts, sulkiés, carriages and coaches. In 1885 William Dwyer moved his coach building business from Kiama to Crown Street. At night the gas lamps illuminated the solid bank buildings, the hotels with lace decorations their balconies and verandahs, the big stores, the smaller shops of the milliners and dressmakers, an occasional tea shop, bakers, butchers, Parkinsons Cordial factory and the produce stores. Waters and Sons would move to Crown Street in 1889 with a shoe shop, Harrigans would start a bicycle business in 1907 and later open Wollongong's first garage for the servicing of motor cars.⁴

But in the 1880s one of the most significant events for the future was the opening of the railway line from Wollongong to Kiama in 1887 followed by the inaugural Kiama-Wollongong-Sydney train a year later. The Illawarra train service had taken many years to become a reality; it had been delayed when the survey papers were destroyed with so many other official government records in the fire of 1862 at Sydney's Garden Palace; the tunnel construction, particularly at Coalcliff, slowed the completion of the Clifton to Waterfall section until 1888. The coming of the railway had many effects.

With the opening of the railway, Kiama now survived not only through supplying milk and butter to Sydney homes but also construction material for Sydney roads. There was also the prospect of Sydney tourists. As the *Australian Star* noted in 1884 'Of the numerous sea coast towns of New South Wales more are more picturesquely situated or more readily accessible from Sydney than is Kiama with its welcome harbour of refuge formed by a noble inlet, surrounded by rugged weather "worn rocks".' In 1890 a Kiama Tourist Association was formed; by the eve of World War One the beachas and accommodation houses were packed. It was similar elsewhere along Illawarra beaches as day trippers and holiday makers journeyed down from Sydney. Equally, Illawarra residents could now make regular visits to Sydney, not just once in a life-time. Trains with lavatories were first introduced in 1899, making them more attractive for family travel.

The railway also provided employment and Cliftons, Thirroul and townships south of Wollongong grew as a result of workers building the railway or working on the trains. The siting of the railway stations sometimes attracted developments away from older centres; Buffi's station drew the population closer to Woonona, Shellharbour lost to Albion Park and in Wollongong business was no longer focused on the port end of Crown Street. Wollongong became even more the centre as people from the northern and southern townships came to town to shop or transact business or to view the larger variety of entertainment at nights when Wollongong station was brightly lit with gas lamps. The trains became too a means of getting to work - the fare from Austinmer to Wollongong was 1/11 (one shilling and eleven-

pence) though workers' trains from Stanwell Park to Wollongong in the afternoons did not begin until 1908 and in 1918 miners were complaining that the seats had no cushions, they had still not been provided in 1926, the railway authorities claiming that the miners' gilt clothes made seat coverings too dirty.

As well as their attraction as transport for people the trains became the carrier of Illawarra goods to Sydney. Apart from dairy products and other food stuffs which in the past had been shipped from Kiamo and Shellharbour and Belmore Basin, some coal was carried by private railway to link with the government railway either to be sent directly to Sydney, as in the case of the Mt Pleasant coal, or to be taken to the harbour as in the case of Mt. Keira. Some still went to the old jetties, but as in the past they were always in danger of being damaged by heavy seas or could not be approached in bad weather, and so gradually fell into disuse. Mount Kembla used its own railway to its jetty at Port Kembla. Belmore Basin did not ever again reach the number of ships that berthed there in 1886. In that year there were 1,624, but even in 1885 Belmore Basin was not deep enough for large ships.⁸

As business flourished there was an extension of some industries and the beginning of others. Two cordial factories established in the 1870s were joined by others, including Parkinsons in Crown Street, and Gordons. W. Osborne, who made aerated water, cordials and ginger beer won prizes for his drinks at the 1892 Annual Wollongong Show and was able to extend the business to a site in Station Street. An iron foundry was established in Charlotte Street and from 1882 produced wagon wheels, fire grates and verandah posts for the growing housing industry. The kerosene shale works, which had been the first in New South Wales when it opened at American Creek in 1885, closed down but there was plenty of work in Illawarra. All the mines were working in 1888 and a number of the mines had coke works attached with others at North Wollongong and Belmore Basin.⁷

Illawarra did not escape the depression of the following decade. At first the *Illawarra Mercury* and the *Argus*, like other Australian newspapers, were full of the news of the 1890 Maritime strike which became a general strike in which the southern miners joined. Once more there were reports of blacklegs in the district, women confronting them at Mount Kembla where the mine was guarded by 100 police with revolvers and batons and 100 soldiers with drawn swords, two Gatling guns and a Nordenfeld, there were similar though smaller scenes near other mines. A public meeting in Wollongong chaired by the Mayor successfully urged mediation which ended the strike in Illawarra. But the strike was followed as elsewhere in Australia by falling wages and unemployment, bank closures and failing businesses. There were many reports of hardship; there were also reports of community aid to miners and their families both during the strike and the depression years. The community was small enough in spite of the large area that Illawarra covered, for close bonds to exist. The closeness of the community was shown in 1902 when Mount Kembla mine disaster killed 96 miners.⁸

By then there had been industrial developments of a different kind. Discussions about the creation of a new harbour near Wollongong had been promoted by two considerations. One was the need for larger and deeper facilities than those provided by Belmore Basin. The other was the New South Wales government's awareness of the attraction of Illawarra as a place for industrial development: land was available close to coal mines and the sea. The first alternative selected was Lake Illawarra and anticipating the construction of harbour facilities, a group of financiers established a smelting works at Dapto, using ores from mines in New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland. Two hundred men found employment in 1896 in the erection of the works and another 300 when lead smelting began two years later.

But the harbour was not constructed at Lake Illawarra. Instead the influence of the owners of the coal mines at Helensburgh, Coalcliff, Mt. Keira, Mt. Pleasant and Mt. Kembla was sufficient to turn the government's mind to the other alternative, Port Kembla. Between January 1890 and April 1896 there had been 1,261,052 tons of coal shipped from the jetties at Bulli, Bellambi, Belmore Basin and Port Kembla; of this nearly 40 per cent, 487,166 tons, had been handled by the Mt. Kembla jetties at Port Kembla. It was claimed that a government-owned port at Kembla would be safe, would attract shipping, industries and population. Work began on the breakwater construction in 1900.

The government's decision to build the harbour at Port Kembla had several consequences. Dapto smelting works closed, a new purchaser planning to reopen it at Port Kembla, though construction at the new site stopped in 1907. In the same year the Electrolyte Refining and Smelting Company announced construction plans at Port Kembla (having first considered the suitability of Waterfall, Austinmer and Bulli). Production of copper and the refining of sulphate was begun two years after the announcement. The government supplied the company with a jetty. It also took over the haulage of coal to the harbour on the railway from Unanderra, bought Mt. Kembla's jetty and extended the railway from Wollongong to Port Kembla in 1916. Two years later a new company, Metal Manufactures, opened at Port Kembla and began producing copper wire tubing and sheeting. Australian Fertilisers followed in 1920. The same year Hoskins decided to move its Lithgow steelworks to Port Kembla though construction did not commence until 1928. The plant started operating in 1928.⁹

This heavy industry came to Port Kembla providing the mixed blessings of greater wealth, employment for an enlarging population and the converting of one section of country land close to Wollongong to a place of smoking chimneys and unpleasant industrial smells. A new wave of immigrants, now mostly Australian-born, came to seek work in the region. By 1933 Wollongong had a population of over 11,000; Central Illawarra, which included Port Kembla with about 3,000 people, as well as Dapto, Mt. Kembla, Unanderra, Wongawilli and Marshall Mount had grown from 4,684 in 1901, to 8,646; Bulli which became a shire in 1907 now had over 15,000 inhabitants; North Illawarra had 11,810. In contrast, the southern part of the region stood still or declined. Shellharbour still rural, had not grown at all, 10

The people who had been attracted to Illawarra by the prospect of jobs, before and after the war of 1914 to 1918, began experiencing unemployment even before the depression of the 1930s. Coal miners endured intermittent work. There were too many ironworkers waiting for jobs at the Steelworks and more than a third of them were unemployed during the depression years. There were always men on the hill near the steelworks hoping for jobs right through the 1930s and some miners did not get work until after the outbreak of the second world war. Under such conditions, many children growing up in Illawarra in the years 1900-39 would experience continuing hardships in their families.¹¹

LIFE AT HOME

One of the most marked features of Australian family life in the early twentieth century was the decline in the birth-rate. The Depression of the 1890s was a watershed. Between 1891 and 1911, the average size of all Australian completed families fell from about seven children to five. Married couples who started a family in 1911 would have an average of just over four children. There were now far fewer children in Illawarra homes. Although the proportion of the population aged under fifteen would remain slightly higher than the State average of about one-third throughout the period 1900-39, it would never reach the high proportion of the nineteenth century.¹²

The effect of this demographic change can be demonstrated through the lives of individual children growing up in Illawarra in the first three decades of this century. It was a change which tended to be seen throughout the region irrespective of the economic circumstances, if not the religious affiliation, of families.

Mary McGoldrick was born in 1897 at Braidwood and came to Wollongong at the age of two. There were six other girls and four boys in her family. Her parents were Roman Catholic. Her father worked as a carpenter in Mount Kembla. There was only a meagre wage to feed the eleven children Arthur Rees was born in 1912 at Woonona, second youngest in a family of seven boys and two girls. The household followed the Presbyterian faith and both father and mother ran a butcher's business at Woonona and then a bakery at Port Kembla.

By the 1920s, not only were most Illawarra families much smaller than those of Mary McGoldrick and Arthur Rees, but for Protestants at least, there were often considerable intervals between the births of children. Avis Bright was born in Port Kembla in 1927. She was the youngest of four children; there had been five years interval between the births of each of the eldest three. Her family were 'regular' Methodist Churchgoers and her father worked in the tube mill at Metal Manufactures. Her future husband, Ces Bright, had been born in Depto in 1928, son of a worker at Wongewilli Colliery. He would have two sisters, six and twelve years younger. The family was also Methodist.

The size of the nuclear family would be one of the important influences that help shape the experiences of the young. So also was the nature of the extended family. Roy Colman was born at Bulli in 1898. Son of a miner, he grew up in poor circumstances in a family of five children. But, unlike Mary McGoldrick, who, despite having many siblings, was an immigrant in the district with few relatives, Roy always had his grandmother who lived in the same mining village. So did Eileen James, the daughter of a miner, born in 1910 and the first in a family of three girls (the others being born in 1918 and 1919). She lived next door to her maternal grandparents. Down the street lived aunts, uncles and cousins. Similar forms of extended family could be found also in the southern parts of the Illawarra. Bill Waldron was born in 1906 in what was still then the small township of Wollongong. He would have two brothers, respectively four and ten years young. His father was a coke worker at Mount Pleasant, but much of Bill's upbringing was left to his grandmother who lived at Mount Kembla.¹³

If families were smaller, then there was also more space at home to bring up children. By the early twentieth century, the Illawarra family residence was beginning to change slowly. Compared to the Sydney region, where over two-thirds of pre-1914 houses were built of brick, over four-fifths of Illawarra housing was constructed of timber. Many pre-World War One houses were still of rough construction. Roy Colman's parents always rented. Their first home on the Bulli mountain-side was 'mostly split slabs and tin between the slabs - bits of tin to stop the draught coming in between the slabs'. Such type of housing in the region continued well into the twentieth century. Many children still grew up in buildings which provided little more than a roof over their heads. In 1928, the health inspector of the Bulli Council reported on the 'shacks' on the heights of Coledale, just four miles north of Bulli:

There is no doubt a very grave scandal permitted in connection with these premises, many of which have no sanitary conveniences whatever and as most of the huts are on the banks of creeks for the convenience of a water supply, the state of the lower portions of these creeks in wet weather is better imagined than described ... In at least one place to my knowledge,

there are two grown men, one woman, and 8 children living in two rooms and a closed verandah. Four girls and the parents sleep in one room and five boys in the other ... In another hut a man and his wife and a large family exist in a couple of rooms. Quite recently the wife was confined and the nurse had to hang sheets around the bed to keep the patient from the view of the children.¹⁴

During the Depression, large numbers of families were forced to accept similar living arrangements. In 1934, the Returned Soldiers Labour Club suggested that at least 3,000 people in the Illawarra were living in 'various types of temporary shelters, without adequate water or sanitary provisions'.¹⁵

Those moving in to the region also found it difficult to find adequate form of housing. If anything, the situation was exacerbated over the inter-war years. Molly McGoldrick's family of 13 lived in houses of 4 or 5 rooms, moving often for cheaper rent. The family of West Hapgood had moved in 1916 from Milton to Woonona when he was aged three. West was the second eldest of five children. His father had been a dairy farmer who had to give up diarying when he was unable to obtain labour during the First World War. At Woonona, he took up contracting work, hauling logs for 10 hours a day. The family rented a weatherboard home with three bedrooms, kitchen and small back verandah. They all bathed in a large galvanised tub and West's mother did the washing outside in a round copper stand. The house stood on a block of 43' by 140' and there were fowls, guinea pigs and a vegetable garden in the backyard.¹⁶

Two decades later, those who came to Illawarra seeking work at the expanding steelworks at Port Kembla often found it difficult to afford even basic accommodation. There was increasing pressure on housing in Wollongong itself. In 1930, in the midst of the Depression, it cost an average 11/10 per week to rent a house in Bulli but 20/1 to rent one in Wollongong. The respective rents for flats were 7/3 and 13/8. Five years later, a two-bedroom flat in Wollongong could cost as much as two pounds ten shillings per week. Families were often forced to share in order to pay such high rents. In at least one case, twelve wharfies and their families were sharing six two-bedroom flats, the rent for each of which amounted to half a weekly wage packet.¹⁷

The unemployed, or those without permanent jobs, had to find other forms of accommodation. By April 1938, it was estimated that there were 407 camps in the district surrounding Port Kembla, housing 1,079 people, of whom 443 were children. Set in low marshy ground, the camps had dreadful problems of sanitation and drainage. The worst camp site was in Flinders Street, just outside the gates of the steelworks where men congregated each day hoping for work. It was a 'distressing and dirty' condition with blocked drains and garbage strewn around. Committed to the industrial expansion of Port Kembla, the State Government finally took note of the housing crisis. In mid-1938, it agreed to build a 'workmen's temporary settlement' on land about a mile from Port Kembla. There was to be housing for 600 people: 20 huts with cubicles for 320 single men and 65 married men's quarters, each containing three to four rooms. Built half of timber and half of canvas, it was not much improvement on the camps replaced.¹⁸

Although many Illawarra children of the early to mid-twentieth century grew up in such forms of primitive housing, the majority of long-term settlers had a more permanent and solid home. Often relatives had helped out in various ways. Eileen James of Bulli lived in a timber house on a block of about 3/4 acres. Her home had a front and back verandah, three bedrooms, kitchen, dining room and

lounge room. Her grandfather owned the house which would pass to her parents on his death. Bill Waldron of Wollongong and his family lived in a home which his grandmother rented. The parents of Avis Bright of Port Kembla were to buy her grandparents' house of 11 rooms. Most Illawarra homes, in the mining villages, in rural areas, and even in Wollongong itself, were set on large blocks of land and children of permanent residents would grow up in these years with much open space around them.

Those children whose parents owned their home had some prospects of both comfort and security. The Rees family built a new four bedroom home at Woonona just after the First World War. So did the parents of Douglas Harrigan who was born in 1918. There was only one other child in the family - another boy born eighteen months before Doug. The family lived next to Doug's father's business in Wollongong until 1923 when they built a new home 150 yards away from the works. Constructed of solid brick, it had a galvanised roof with a large verandah, lounge, dining room, kitchen, back verandah, separate laundry and two main bedrooms. The block was large - 80' x 200' - with room for tennis courts, fishpond, shrubs, trees, vegetable garden and workshop. In common with other residents in the district who were less well off, the Harrigans also kept 'chooks'.¹⁸

The brick home of the Harrigans was not typical of housing in the region. Most residences built in the Illawarra during the 1920s and 1930s were constructed from weatherboard with iron or tile roofs. In the 1920s, it cost about four hundred - five hundred pounds to construct a weatherboard home of three bedrooms; almost twice as much to build in brick. By the mid-1930s, much housing finance was coming from the building societies. In the late 1930s the area around Port Kembla was witnessing a small private housing boom. By 1943, the building societies in the Central Illawarra Shire had financed the construction of 721 dwellings with advances totalling four hundred and thirty five thousand nine hundred and fifty three pounds. Composed of two bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen and conveniences, the typical building society financed house in the district by the late 1930s cost six hundred and eleven pounds to build. The co-operative society would advance six hundred and five pounds repayable over twenty-one years with monthly repayments of three pounds nineteen shillings and nine pence. Building society, bank or other mortgages opened the way to home ownership even to recent arrivals.¹⁹

Illawarra Housing 1933

| Area Per Sq. Mile | Av. No. of Occupied Dwellings | Av. No. of Inmates | | Av. No. of Rooms | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| | | (a) Per Private House | (b) Per Flat | (a) Per Private House | (b) Per Flat |
| Bulli | 27.37 | 4.05 | 3.19 | 4.88 | 2.05 |
| N.S.W. Shires | 0.99 | 4.20 | 3.10 | 4.84 | 2.62 |
| <i>Per Acre</i> | | | | | |
| Illawarra Central | 0.03 | 3.85 | 3.20 | 4.17 | 2.85 |
| Illawarra North | 0.24 | 4.28 | 3.65 | 4.63 | 2.27 |
| Wollongong | 1.05 | 4.36 | 2.85 | 5.09 | 2.64 |
| NSW Municipalities | 0.27 | 4.27 | 2.85 | 5.24 | 2.64 |

Source: Commonwealth Census, 1933

Private Housing Built in
Central Illawarra 1927 - 40

| Year | Brick Residences | | | Weatherboard Residences | | |
|------|------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| | No. | Total Value | Average Value | No. | Total Value | Average Value |
| | | (pounds) | (pounds) | | (pounds) | (pounds) |
| 1927 | 8 | 6192 | 774 | 37 | 17933 | 481 |
| 1928 | 9 | 8037 | 893 | 81 | 42874 | 529 |
| 1929 | 18 | 17854 | 991 | 82 | 30515 | 492 |
| 1930 | 6 | 4890 | 831 | 46 | 20368 | 442 |
| 1931 | — | — | — | 13 | 4308 | 331 |
| 1932 | 8 | 3460 | 575 | 27 | 4979 | 184 |
| 1933 | 3 | 1560 | 520 | 37 | 11870 | 320 |
| 1934 | 11 | 8030 | 730 | 113 | 52631 | 465 |
| 1935 | 18 | 15777 | 830 | 96 | 47445 | 494 |
| 1936 | 22 | 19021 | 864 | 110 | 52072 | 473 |
| 1937 | 92 | 78932 | 857 | 213 | 109153 | 512 |
| 1938 | 79 | 74311 | 940 | 230 | 128787 | 559 |
| 1939 | 40 | 36500 | 912 | 174 | 112422 | 646 |
| 1940 | 27 | 24811 | 918 | 117 | 67125 | 573 |

Source: Central Illawarra Shire Housing Report, 1943.

Born in Lithgow in 1922, Ken Auburn had come to Wollongong in 1931 with his parents and sister. His father was a roller at the steelworks, earning about eight pounds per week. They owned a mortgaged three-bedroom weatherboard and iron-roofed cottage in North Wollongong. As with a growing number of children in Illawarra, Ken had one of the benefits of smaller-sized families - a bedroom of one's own. So did his future wife Joan. "My mother went to the trouble of making it a feminine room for me with white painted furniture and frilly bedspread. I had a very nice bedroom." Joan had been born in Strathfield, Sydney, in 1927. She came to Wollongong in 1930 with her parents after the Water Board appointed her father Inspector of the spun pipes manufacture at the steelworks. After renting for a period, the family built a home at North Wollongong, next door to the Auburns.²¹

By the 1930s, the comforts of home for both children and adults were becoming more possible. In part, this was the result of new forms of power generation. South Bulli Coal Co. supplied electricity in 1913 to Russell Vale and northwards as far as Helensburg. E.R. & S. provided electrical power to Port Kembla in 1914. The streets were lit up with bright lights. In 1919 the Wollongong City Council accepted a scheme for providing domestic electricity from the State power station at Port Kembla. By the 1920s electricity had been introduced to much of Illawarra.²²

Eventually, electrical power would allow the introduction of a number of labour-saving devices, but few were present in Illawarra homes before the second world war. As one of the better-off in the district, the Davids' household, by the 1930s, had electric heaters and vacuum cleaner, but Mrs. David still cooked over a combustion, and later gas, stove, used a stove-heated iron, and washed with a copper

and mangle. The air-cooled meat chest and later ice chest would also remain in operation in many Hawera homes until the late 1930s.

The most universal use of electricity prior to 1939 was through the light bulb. Lighting in the pre-1914 homes of Molly McGoldrick and Roy Coltman generally came from candles or basic solid or liquid fuels such as kerosene. Roy's father read the paper each evening by the light of the fire. Electric light helped to re-orient family activities. Prior to the 1920s, family life centred on the kitchen with warmth around the stove in winter. If there was a dining room or lounge it was usually kept for visitors and special occasions. With improvements in both lighting and accommodation, there had emerged in some households by the 1930s a family room. For the Davids this was the 'breakfast room'. In the case of Ken Auburn it was either the 'sun room' (used in winter) or the lounge where the radio was located. One of the most widely-used electrical appliances, radio, also helped transform home life. With her extended family and community network, Eileen James remembers home musical evenings as an important part of growing up in the early 1920s. A decade later 'listening' (to serials, quiz shows or the *entrees*) had become one of the central features of family life. Visitors now came in occasionally for a game of cards.²³

Indirectly, new technology in the home also helped to change the nature of children's tasks. In the larger families in the early twentieth century children played an important part in either maintaining the household or directly assisting in the family economy. There was usually a division of labour between the tasks allotted to girls and boys. In Molly McGoldrick's family, each girl had a different task each week, such as making the beds or cleaning the floors; the boys had to get in the wood. Roy Coltman would help out with bee hives and feed the fowls in the morning. West Haggard's job was to get wood for the fuel stove, a task which was supposed to take precedence over all other activities.

It was my job to go to the bush, cart the firewood home, and it was also my job to cut the firewood up and get it in to light the fire of a morning before he (his father) left for work. When I used to arrive home from school they played cricket in the middle of the road, there was no motor cars, there was only one person in the street that owned a motor car, and the rest had no cars whatsoever, and we used to play cricket with a kerosene tin for stumps in the middle of the dirt road. And one particular afternoon I arrived home from school and they had the kerosene tin in the middle of the dirt road and they were ready to play cricket and I had to cut the firewood. So I found some rotten wood that was easy to break up to put in the wood box; I was anxious to get out and play cricket. And the following morning when my father got up to light the fire to boil the water for his cup of tea before he went to work the fire wouldn't light owing to the state of the decayed wood. And he came into my bedroom and he didn't wake me up he got hold of me by the neck and scruff of my pyjamas and lifted me up out of my bed and told me to go and cut some decent wood to light the fire.

It was also expected of Arthur Rees in a larger family, but of more comfortable circumstances than the Haggards, that he and his brothers would help out in various ways by chopping the firewood or feeding the hens, even though he had no specific tasks. Sometimes he wanted a monetary return which was not always forthcoming.

I can remember one time when my mother sent me for a shovel of coal, and my mother was

always very kind and she was home from business this particular day and she asked me to get the shovel of coal and I said, 'I'll get it if you give me a penny, Mother', and she said, 'No, you'll get no penny'. But knowing how kind she was, I reasoned that once I got the shovel of coal I would get the penny when I brought the shovelful of coal back. Anyhow, I brought it back into the kitchen and I said, 'Now, Mum, where's my penny?' and she said 'I didn't promise you a penny and you're not getting a penny'. I said, 'Right, no penny, no coal', and I took the shovel of coal back and tipped it on the heap, and I got a belt over the ear 'ole for that.²⁴

When tasks of children became no longer so important in maintaining the household or assisting the family economy, they still remained as duties, even though enforced in different ways. Ces Bright, growing up principally in the 1930s, the only boy and eldest in the family, still chopped the wood for his mother's copper, scrubbed the open verandah, mowed the lawns and helped his father in the garden. His future wife, Avril, however, the youngest in a family of four children, had no specific chores, except for making her own bed. Ken Auburn had to run messages and mow the lawns, all of which he was happy to do provided it did not interfere too much with his pleasures. His future wife, Joan, had to clean the bathroom on Saturdays and wash the dishes.

There was a similar continuity in the generally expected behaviour of children. In the large early twentieth century families, affection between parents and children was not always openly expressed. There were too many kids in the McGoldrick household for kisses, cuddles and bed-time stories. Molly's mother kept a strap and handed it out freely. All had to be careful lest they 'not do as you were told' or 'give back answers'.

I remember one day, when I was about sixteen I think, mother was sewing at the machine and she said something to me and I just looked back like that and she upped with the scissors and threw it at me, just caught me there in the hip. I never looked back again.

Two decades later, in Joan Auburn's household of two adults and two children, there was open affection, 'kisses and cuddles and tucking into bed', but her mother was still 'the disciplinarian' who had the 'greatest authority'. As with most of her generation in Illawarra, whatever their social background, Joan was taught to 'behave' at the table, and to be 'polite' to others. 'My mother set a great store on appearance and behaviour outside the home'.

In general, it was expected that children should still defer to their elders. As Ces Bright at Dapto remembers,

We were always brought up very strict in behaviour, especially whenever we went... We were chastised if we done anything wrong... We were always taught to respect the elders and if we didn't, look out ... One occasion I never ever forgot. I was going with Mum and Dad to shop on the Friday night (used to be shopping on a Friday night). A certain person went past and I called him by his Christian name instead of calling him Master. I remember Dad chastised me pretty hard with a clip behind the ear.²⁵

Such deference was usually earned out to the adult with whom children would have most contact outside the home - their teacher.

While the birth rate declined and families grew smaller, Illawarra schools became larger and often more crowded. The nineteenth century experience of growing up had often been in large, extended families and, in rural areas at least, rather small bush schools. Schooling itself was often neither compulsory nor universal but an adjunct to the requirements of the family economy. Certainly this had been true for the majority of children at both Kiama and Bulli. For this particular generation, schooling was now virtually universal and compulsory. In New South Wales, the Education Act of 1910 required all parents to ensure that their children were receiving efficient instruction between the ages of seven and fourteen. In urban areas at least, attendance was further enforced. The larger public world of school for children became as, if not more, important than the smaller, more private world of the family.

With the growing public institutionalisation of all the young, the early to mid-twentieth century is often known as the era of the 'New Education'. Those in charge of administering Australian education constantly gave attention to increasing educational efficiency and standards of teaching. There was much talk of having child-centred curricula. Quite often, however, the old nineteenth century aims of schooling remained behind a facade of apparent change. If anything, the 'New Education' was only part of the process of adjusting social institutions to technological change. At the local level, in such areas as Illawarra, the adjustment meant not so much new ideas in education but the struggles to accommodate a growing school population in a region being transformed from a rural environment to part of the industrial heartland of New South Wales.

One of the earliest signs of this transition is perhaps best seen in that part of the Illawarra region which would undergo the most rapid transformation in the years 1890 to 1939. During the late nineteenth century, Port Kembla was still a small, basically rural settlement. It was not until 1890 that a provisional school had been established for 29 children. These children came from only eleven families; three of their fathers were farmers and six worked on the local wharf. The school began in a building which had been offered by the Mount Kembla Coal Company.

In 1901 it was agreed to convert Port Kembla Provisional into a full public school and erect a schoolroom to accommodate fifty pupils with the prospect of extending accommodation to between 150 and 200 pupils. The site would be on land resumed for government buildings. There the school remained for six years, close to the centre of the expanding township of Port Kembla.²⁶

In 1907 the government sold the land on which the school stood to E.R. & S. The school moved to a new site a mile out of town, near to Port Kembla harbour. It was this move, associated with increasing pressure on school accommodation, which brought protests from local parents. Four months after the removal of the school, a group of parents wrote to the Minister for Public Instruction. They pointed out first that there were now about 100 children in the school but only one teacher. More significantly, they drew attention to the problem of access to the school. The road to the school was crossed by 'Salty Creek' which was at least one foot deep at the crossing and up to sixty feet wide. To avoid the road, children had to cross over a government railway line 'which, being built up on large stone, is exceedingly dangerous to young children. In addition to the risk involved from passing trains, from which there is no protection'.²⁷

For the next seven years the parents and residents of Port Kembla urged the Department of

Education to move the school back into the township. Most of the objections came from the membership of the Port Kembla Progress Association, formed in 1908. The plea grew rather more urgent as the industrialisation and growth of the port area continued, with the expansion of more railway lines. The Department officials agreed that at least some action was needed to improve accommodation in the school. In March 1912 the local inspector reported:

The only accommodation available is a room 30' x 20'. The enrolment is 135 and at times there are 110 present, the quarterly average will probably be 88.

The lighting is mainly behind the pupils, and the glass is not transparent.

The furniture is old; the school badly needs renovation; the verandah does duty as weather-shed,旱廁和lavatory, the closets are ant-eaters; the tanks are worn out past repairing, the grounds are not properly fenced and stock break in and camp on the premises.²⁸

The Department proposed at first to erect a new building but would not consider the removal of the school. Its reasons were basically twofold. First, it was suggested that the future growth of Port Kembla was not quite clear. Secondly, despite its proximity to the noisy and dirty high level jetty, to move the school back into the town would mean it would become subject to the smoke and fume of E.R. & S. There was a further problem also in that the Labor Minister for Education, A.C. Carmichael, refused to purchase a possible site from the Wentworth Estate for what he considered an exorbitant price. The local residents continued to press vigorously for action. Finally, in December 1915, a deputation waited upon the Minister. After a series of further delays, it was agreed to select a site from land set aside for the Public Works Department and near the E.R. & S. plant.²⁹

The parents and residents had won the day, to a degree at least. H.R. Lee, secretary of the Port Kembla Progress Association, accountant at E.R. & S., and one of the deputation to the Minister in December 1915, had pointed out there were inconveniences and dangers in the school remaining where it was:

The children have to cross 4 railway lines, pass the State Industrial Quarry, and there is a swamp subject to tidal influence and some of the smaller children have to get on the backs of the older ones. Some of the children get mixed up with the trains, recently. It is a matter of danger to the children and the parents will not send them.

But there were also dangers in removing the site. As H.R. Lee had also admitted,

Speaking on behalf of the Company our works are smelting works and a certain amount of fume is given off. Possibly extension will be made in the smelting operations there and it will take place in the direction of that site and rather close to the school than would be pleasant. There would be certain surface fumes that would float over towards the school and which would be unavoidable.

(The Minister) I understand that all the timber on this side has been killed by the fumes.

Most of our stuff is partially treated product, we smelt very little crude ore. If you put up a

good expensive school and development later on takes place with the Company where by more smelters are put up in that corner, the school will certainly have the disadvantages of certain fumes.³⁰

It was not only the children in the immediate vicinity of Port Kembla who were affected by the increasing industrialisation of Illawarra. The growing population in both Port Kembla and Wollongong put considerable pressure upon all the schools, but particularly in the Wollongong area. The enrolments in the small mining village school of Bulli as well as in the nearby larger Woonona Public remained fairly constant in the inter-war years. So did the numbers of children in the rural settlement of Depto south of Wollongong. In contrast, enrolments at both Port Kembla and Wollongong grew rapidly. By the 1930s, Wollongong Public was one of the largest State schools in New South Wales. It was only with the establishment of West Wollongong Public in the 1930s and the opening of separate sites for the Junior Technical (1929) and Domestic Science (1944) schools for the older children that the school population in Wollongong Public began to stabilise and then decline.

School Enrolments
1915 - 48

| Year | Schools | | | | |
|------|---------|---------|------------|-------------|--------|
| | Bulli | Woonona | Wollongong | Port Kembla | Deptco |
| 1915 | 128 | 648 | 1121 | 185 | 134 |
| 1920 | 157 | 713 | 1144 | 295 | 111 |
| 1925 | 181 | 736 | 1495 | 338 | 101 |
| 1930 | 139 | 730 | 1866 | 405 | 145 |
| 1935 | 179 | 672 | 2013 | 490 | 176 |
| 1940 | 171 | 539 | 2330 | 671 | 184 |
| 1945 | 104 | 562 | 936 | 662 | 168 |

Note: The figures represent total enrolments for the first quarter of term of each year.

Source: Department of Education Records.

Since the late nineteenth century Wollongong Public had always been the premier school in the Illawarra. First established in 1851 under the National Board of Education, the school had moved to its site in Smith Street in 1882. By 1889 there were 380 pupils on the rolls. In 1892, after representations from S.H. Smith, the principal teacher (and later Director of Education in New South Wales), Wollongong became a Superior Public School, so enabling the development of secondary education and preparation of pupils for the university examinations. By 1895 Smith could claim, when applying for promotion to become a Class IA teacher, 'At the last Junior Examination my school secured nine passes, being fifth in point of numbers among the Public Schools of the colony, second among country Public Schools and first among schools not in charge of IA teachers'.³¹

Wollongong Public soon became the premier state school in the district, attracting pupils from as far away as Shellharbour and Kiama. Growing enrolments at Wollongong in the early twentieth century strained an accommodation still related to nineteenth century teaching aims and standards. By 1908 there were 602 students enrolled in the school, divided into the three departments of infants', boys' and



DAPTO SMELTERS, c1900

The Smelting Company of Australia Ltd. was established in 1895 to build and conduct a refinery for non-ferrous ores at Dapto. By 1905, the smelters had ceased to be profitable and were closed.

Source: J. Shepley Collection.



CROWN STREET, WOLLONGONG, 1914

Easterly aspect from the Keira Street intersection.

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



WOLLONGONG HARBOUR, 1900-1910

Photographed from the gun emplacement, now Battery Park, on Cliff Road. The harbour basin was constructed in 1868 and the lighthouse installed in 1871.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



PORt KEMBLA, 1910

Southerly view to Wentworth Street. The chimney was part of the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company plant and was built on the site of the former public school.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



MAY DAY, 1938

The celebration of May Day in Australia began in 1891. Marches were held in Wollongong from 1912 when coalminers took an unpaid holiday. The Commercial Hotel in the background was located on the corner of Crown and Church Streets, Wollongong.

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



ANZAC DAY, 1917

The first recruits left Wollongong on 11 September 1914. ANZAC Day was celebrated for the first time in Wollongong by a march on 26 April 1917.

Source: Mitchell Library, Sydney



OTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1910

Empire Day was celebrated in schools throughout Australia by displays and picnics on 26 May each year. At Otford, the whole community attended the school picnic.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



PORT KEMBLA BUS SERVICE

The growth of Port Kembla as an industrial and residential area necessitated passenger transport services although many workers continued to walk to work from their homes in Wollongong. William Dwyer began business as a sulky maker. With the advent of the motor vehicle he custom built truck and bus bodies.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



FAMILY OUTING, STUART PARK

By the late 1930's, family cars were more commonplace and used for outings to places like Stuart Park, Wollongong and the Blow Hole at Kiama.

Source: K. McCarthy Collection.



SHELLHARBOUR SCHOOLCHILDREN, 1920

Horses were a frequent form of transport for many country schoolchildren. School grounds included a horse paddock.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



PORT KEMBLA PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1907

A public school was established at Port Kembla in 1890. Between 1901 and 1907 the school was situated on land later sold to the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Co. Ltd.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



BULLI PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1928

In 1923, two interconnecting classrooms were added to the Bulli school to supplement the original school built in 1869. This upper primary class was taught by the headmaster, Walter Kebby.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



STANWELL PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL, 1917

The Stanwell Park Public School began in January 1917.

Source: Wollongong Public Library.



PORT KEMBLA, 1934

Aerial view of the Australian Iron and Steel Works.

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.

girls'. In the boys' department there were only two rooms, respectively 64' x 24' and 25' x 18', in which a total enrolment of 226 (and average attendance of 180) was taught. In 1910-13 the school was in part modernised. The existing school was remodelled and a new infants' department was built. A building to include basic science facilities and manual training for the older children was constructed, although with growing enrolment it was later used to accommodate normal classrooms. In the classrooms themselves, the old long gallery rows of desks, each 10'6", sometimes 'taxed to utmost capacity' accommodating up to seven children, now gave way to dual seating. Even then the general accommodation problem on the 1880s two-and-a-half acre site was not overcome as pupils continued to enrol 32.

In 1922 the secretary of the local Citizens' Association complained to the local member:

There are over 1000 children and they are billeted out in all the Halls of the Town - there is no playground space at the School proper.

Cannot something of a permanent nature be done - it is not a fair deal having the kiddies spend much of their time marching about the Town to the Public Halls and the rent paid for the Buildings used temporally (sic) would pay interest on a fair amount.²³

During the early to mid 1920s, state financial borrowings allowed many government departments to carry out building programmes. New two storey brick school buildings sprang up in the expanding suburbs of Sydney. Wollongong also benefited. A new boys' department of two storeys containing eight rooms was built in 1923. In 1923-24, the Department of Education acquired two adjoining blocks to increase playground space. Despite these improvements, the growing school population still led to crowded classrooms. In 1935-36 there was only one class in either the kindergarten or girls' department which was under 40, while six classes had an enrolment of 50 or more.

Wollongong Public School Enrolments

| Girls' Department (1935) | | Infants (1936) | |
|--------------------------|------|----------------|------|
| Class | Nos. | Class | Nos. |
| 3 B | 50 | Kindergarten | 58 |
| 3 A | 48 | 1 A | 43 |
| 4 B | 47 | 1 B | 44 |
| 4 A | 47 | 1 C | 56 |
| 5 B | 46 | Upper Kinder. | 38 |
| 5 A | 50 | 2 B | 48 |
| 6 B | 58 | 2 C | 47 |
| 6 A | 59 | | |

Source: A.O.N.S.W. 10/8164, Wollongong Public School File

In such crowded environments, not atypical of many inter-war Australian schools, teachers taught and pupils supposedly learned. Even in the small sized schools there was often little opportunity for much personal contact between the teacher and pupils. Roy Colman at Woonona, before the First World War, found that 'the teachers took no notice to you'. Children had to find ways of survival,

I remember one day, my little mate alongside of me, we were told to do a sum on the black-board and I just peeped over on to his and the teacher copped me and called me out but I remember what he done ... and what I gathered there I could do it quite easy and I bluffed him. If I was shown anything - but the teachers in those days had big classes and they never had the time to go around individuals and show them what to do ... You really had to pick it up yourself.³⁴

The 'hidden curriculum' of the early twentieth century state schools was as important as the formal syllabus. Some nineteenth century imported values continued well into the twentieth century. In 1908 the State Government had instituted Empire Day to celebrate Australia's place in the British Empire. It would become an important event in the calendar of the state schools. Many children would look forward to Empire Day because it would mean a half-holiday and the time for letting off crackers. There was, however, first of all the formal ceremonies at school. In 1916 Anzac Day was added as a day of national mourning. In Bill Waldron's days at Wollongong Public at the end of World War I, children had to recite as they saluted the flag.

It is only an old bit of bunting,
It's only an old coloured rag,
But thousands have died for its honour
And shed their best for their flag.³⁵

Behind such ceremonies lay continuing disputes in the world of adults. Catholic children in the state schools often had a difficult time. In Ku-ring-gai, in 1902, the local police constable had even charged a Catholic student in Klammer Public with obscene language, alleging that she had called the local Anglican clergymen 'a one-eyed bugger' and told the assistant teacher 'Bugger you. Go tobuggery'. A potential pupil teacher, the girl had apparently aroused the jealousy of Protestant children, including the constable's own family. The local inspector found the charge unfounded.³⁶

In Catholic schools, 'Australia Day' was celebrated as a counter to Empire Day. During the First World War, such sectarian and ethnic disputes came to a head over conscription. The legacy of the wartime conscription debates lingered on. Sectarian animosities were at a height in the early 1920s as many Protestants accused Catholics of Irish descent of disloyalty. In 1922, saluting the flag became compulsory in state schools. Children were not unaffected by this climate. Most of the families near Bill Waldron's home in East Wollongong were Catholics; he was the only child in the local area to go to the public school. Amongst his acquaintances, adults did not approve of having a girl friend who was a Catholic. Children themselves developed their own rhymes to taunt those of opposing faiths.

Catholics, Catholics, ring the bell
While the Protestants go to hell.

Catholic frogs jump like dogs,
Eat no meat on Friday.³⁷

Conformity was also reinforced in more direct ways. The world of early to mid-twentieth century school itself was one in which the authority of the teacher was dominant. In the Illawarra region at least, there was none of the active and consistent pupil resistance, culminating sometimes in school strikes with

parental support which, it has been suggested, occurred in England in this period. Parents interfered only rarely. One such incident did take place in the mining villages of Scarborough-Cifton in 1914. In November 1914 the head teacher at Cifton school was brought to trial on charges of indecent assault against a number of his female pupils. In defending himself, the accused gave evidence, according to a press report in *The Truth*, implying that there were 'objectionable children' in the school and suggesting that Cifton was known in the teaching service as 'the hell of the South Coast'. His assistant teachers supported him, claiming that the moral tone in the school was not high while many of the girls were untruthful. Cifton parents and citizens objected strongly to these inferences. A public meeting protested at the press report and conveyed to the Department of Education, through their local member J.B. Nicholson, a request that all the teachers be replaced. Failing such action, the parents threatened to refuse to send their children to school following the Christmas school holidays. Within a month the Department agreed to remove all of the teachers.³⁸

The circumstances of this incident were unusual. In general, parents supported the actions of teachers in disciplining pupils, even if it was sometimes unjust. At Woonona

In fifth class they had a teacher who used to carry his cane up the sleeve. During one lesson there had been some talking in the classroom and he had threatened that the next one that spoke he would cane. And the boy behind my husband spoke to him and George turned his head ... didn't speak, but the teacher saw him turn his head and he was the one that was punished. He hit right across the back with his cane and as a reflex [George is a red head] he picked up the ink-well and threw it over him, and then left the classroom and went home. Of course he was in a terrible lot of strife from his father. His father used a belt on him. He said that he wasn't going back to school any more, but anyway he was taken back the next day. He had to apologise and go through that sort of thing.³⁹

Most children remained at school until fourteen. As part of the re-organisation of education in New South Wales, Wollongong Public had become a district school in 1905 and from 1911 offered secondary work, preparing a select few for the soon-to-be established Intermediate Certificate. By 1916 there were about 200 students of secondary standard housed in five rooms of Wollongong Public. From 1913, the local Citizens' Association began to urge the government to found a High School. Eventually the Department of Education acquired a site on Smith's Hill about a quarter of a mile from the public school. Wollongong High opened in 1917. The school was designed to serve all of the Illawarra and much of the South Coast beyond Kiama. Over two-thirds of the 1917 enrolment arrived by train. B.E. Erton, one of the first entrants and also holder of one of two state bursaries awarded to the South Coast, came from the Kiama area. He cycled three miles to the train each day. Another eight students travelled up from Nowra each Monday, boarding in private homes for the week. The majority came from homes much closer to Wollongong.

Although the school, once settled into its new home on Smith's Hill, soon resolved itself into two amicable factions calling themselves the 'cow cookies' and the 'coalies' it could not be said that attendance was largely drawn from these two categories.

In fact over the period under review (c. 1917-20) only three boys attended from farm families south of Kiama, the largest contingent of such coming from the Captio and Yallah areas.

Similarly although a proportion of boys and girls from north of Wollongong were children of coal miners the largest group in any one category came from teachers' families.⁴⁰

Wollongong High School Entrants

| Area | 1917 | | 1921 | | 1933 | |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Central Illawarra — | | | | | | |
| Wollongong | 88 | 32.2 | 32 | 21.2 | 50 | 26.0 |
| Port Kembla | 6 | 2.2 | 6 | 3.9 | 5 | 0.5 |
| Unanderra | 5 | 1.8 | 2 | 1.3 | 3 | 1.5 |
| Lake Illawarra | 1 | 0.3 | - | - | - | - |
| North Illawarra — | | | | | | |
| Fairy Meadow | 14 | 5.1 | 8 | 3.9 | 17 | 8.8 |
| Cornwall | 20 | 7.3 | 23 | 16.2 | 21 | 10.9 |
| Bulli Shire — | | | | | | |
| Woy Woy | 24 | 8.8 | 13 | 8.8 | 16 | 8.3 |
| Bulli | 18 | 5.8 | 8 | 5.3 | 9 | 4.7 |
| Thirroul | 11 | 4.0 | 15 | 9.9 | 22 | 11.4 |
| Austinmer | 7 | 2.5 | 1 | 0.6 | 5 | 2.6 |
| Coledale | 7 | 2.5 | 12 | 7.9 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Womabarra | - | - | - | - | 4 | 2.0 |
| Scarborough | 4 | 1.4 | 6 | 2.6 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Clifton | 6 | 2.2 | - | - | - | - |
| Stanwell Park | 1 | 0.3 | - | - | - | 3.6 |
| Shellharbour — | | | | | | |
| Dapto | 18 | 6.6 | 4 | 2.8 | 6 | 3.1 |
| Shellharbour | 3 | 1.1 | - | - | 3 | 1.5 |
| Albion Park | 9 | 3.3 | 1 | 0.8 | 2 | 1.0 |
| Kiama (area) — | | | | | | |
| South Coast | 5 | 1.8 | 14 | 9.2 | - | - |
| Other N.S.W. | 6 | 2.2 | - | - | 3 | 1.5 |
| Not Known | 6 | 2.2 | 3 | 1.9 | 1 | 0.6 |
| | 273 | | 151 | | 192 | |

In effect, examination of the school registers shows that the first Wollongong High entrants came from a variety of backgrounds. Those with professional fathers were much over-represented and those with fathers in commerce slightly less so (when compared to the male occupations of the region revealed at the 1921 census). Although a fair number of the first entrants came from farming backgrounds, the proportion of farmers' children at Wollongong High seems to have declined over the Inter-war years.

The occupational group most under-represented in 1917 was miners. By the 1930s, however, sons and daughters of miners were well represented at Wollongong High. In contrast, students with industrial backgrounds were slightly under-represented amongst 1917 and 1933 entrants, and particularly so in 1933. Part of the explanation is obviously related to the transitory nature of the steel work force as compared to the settled mining communities. Residential location seems to bear this out. Thus, students from the mining village of Bulli Shire were only one-quarter of total enrolment in 1917 but one-third in 1933, while Port Kembla had 2.2% of entrants in 1917 and only 0.5% in 1933. Miners' families might have suffered during the Depression but at least some of their children were able to go on to secondary school.

Wollongong High Entrants
Occupations of Fathers

| Category | Cohorts | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---------|------|------|------|-------------|----|------|------|-------------|--|
| | 1917 | | 1921 | | 1921 Census | | 1933 | | 1933 Census | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | | | No. | % | | |
| Professional | 43 | 15.7 | 20 | 13.2 | 34 | 26 | 13.5 | 2.9 | | |
| Commercial | 54 | 19.7 | 26 | 17.2 | 9.0 | 28 | 14.5 | 9.9 | | |
| Industrial: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Trades | 46 | 16.9 | 15 | 9.9 | 27.4 | 29 | 15.1 | 35.1 | | |
| Unskilled | 21 | 7.8 | 20 | 13.2 | | 21 | 10.9 | | | |
| Mining | 35 | 12.9 | 40 | 26.4 | 37.0 | 52 | 27.0 | 26.6 | | |
| Farming | 30 | 10.9 | 7 | 4.6 | 13.3 | 3 | 1.5 | 9.3 | | |
| Transport | 13 | 4.7 | 11 | 7.2 | 6.8 | 8 | 4.1 | 6.3 | | |
| Other/Not Stated | 32 | 11.9 | 12 | 7.9 | 3.0 | 26 | 12.9 | 11.6 | | |

Notes: The category 'Other' amongst 1933 entrants includes only one unemployed, while the Census category 'Other' in 1933 includes pensioners and unemployed.
 The Census percentages are based on male breadwinners in Bulli Shire, Central Illawarra, Northern Illawarra, Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Jamberoo.

Source: A.O.N.S.W. 1/7369-9, Wollongong High Registers, Commonwealth Census, 1921, 1933.

Wollongong High expanded throughout the inter-war years. There were 220 students in 1919 with a staff of 16. A decade later, the enrolment was 465 and the staff had grown to 22. The school developed many of the traditions formerly found in non-government schools and which were now incorporated into the New South Wales high school system in the 1920s. There was a school magazine (1922), old students' union (1923), school colours and sporting competitions. Many of the early entrants stayed only for a couple of years. Gradually, retention rates improved. In 1929, 27 candidate passed the Leaving Certificate examination; a year later the school had 92 students in the years beyond the Intermediate, so establishing Wollongong High as a first class high school. In the mid-1930s, in the midst of Depression, about one quarter of students still left at or before the compulsory retention age of school leavers.⁴¹

Wollongong High School Entrants
Age of Leaving

| Age | 1817 entrants | | 1833 entrants | |
|-----------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| 14 | 24 | 8.9 | 48 | 24.6 |
| 15 | 45 | 16.7 | 32 | 16.4 |
| 16 | 78 | 28.8 | 23 | 11.7 |
| 17 | 72 | 26.7 | 9 | 4.6 |
| 18 | 45 | 16.7 | 9 | 4.6 |
| Not Known | 5 | 1.8 | 64 | 32.8 |

Note: The large number of older school leavers amongst the 1817 entrants was in part due to their older age on entry.

Source A.D.N.S.W. 1/7388-9, Wollongong High School Registers.

Wollongong High was the only State secondary school in the district during the 1920s and 1930s, although the Catholic Christian Brothers established a school in central Wollongong in 1926. The vast majority of Illawarra adolescents did not go beyond the primary stage of schooling. Some boys attended the Junior Technical School established on the site of Wollongong Public in 1917 and moved to West Wollongong in 1929.

Elsewhere there had been earlier attempts to relate school curricula to industrial and commercial requirements. In 1910, E.R. & S. had supported the opening of a private Technical School. Classes were offered in mechanical drawing, carpentry, plumbing and electrical engineering. By 1918, the company was also providing a carpenter to Port Kembla Public on one afternoon a week to instruct boys in light woodwork. The senior boys also visited the industrial works each week. E.R. & S. also offered the services of two typewriters and a teacher.⁴²

At Wollongong Public, older girls went into the Domestic Science Department. Here the courses included both cooking and preparation for female designated jobs. By 1928, the girls in eighth grade were receiving four periods of shorthand and two periods of typing per week, while the 28 girls in ninth grade had ten periods per week on shorthand and typing. Supposedly this was designed to prepare students for work but it was rather futile in an area where there were few female clerical positions.⁴³

PLAY, WORK AND THE SABBATH DAY

Most Illawarra children tolerated school during the week. After school, although there was some 'free time', there were also tasks to be done, duties to be performed, or, particularly for those in high school, homework to complete. It was on the weekends that there was most time for playing. Sometimes the family itself might all go out, and this seems to have become more rather than less frequent over this period. Molly McGoldrick can remember only one family outing in her childhood: a picnic on Gooseberry Island in Lake Illawarra. Roy Colman mixed very little with his five sisters, and the family had few outings, although he can recall a train trip to his aunt's place at Paddington, from where he watched

the French fleet sail up Sydney Harbour in 1908. Undoubtedly, motor transportation helped to increase mobility for some families. The Davids had a car and often went on picnics to Fairy Creek, Towradgi Creek or Stuart Park or took short drives to Jambaroo or Kiama on a Saturday. The family also went away on holidays to Dorrigo or Katoomba.⁴⁴

By the mid-1920s the motor car was having such an impact, even in the northern mining villages, that efforts were being made to restrict its speed and warn children against playing in the main road. Yet, even in the 1930s some families such as the Brights at Depto still travelled by horse and sulky. For them, it was a full day's outing to visit the beach. At Christmas, the whole Bright family camped at Windang where Ces's father taught him how to surf.⁴⁵

One of the universal and continuing traditions in most Illawarra families was religious observance. Not that all members of the family attended church regularly. The McGoldricks were Catholics but did not go to church often 'because we never had the decent clothes to go in'. Instead, prayers and rosaries were said in the home. Along with most other Illawarra children born before 1914, Molly was quite aware of continuing sectarianism in the community. This did not stop her from mixing with the Church of England family next door and singing their hymns.⁴⁶

It was perhaps where the influence of grandparents was obvious that nineteenth century religious traditions most persisted. Bill Walton would stay most weekends with this grandmother at Mount Kembla. She was a lady of firm sabbatarian principles. On the Saturday, Bill would load up a billy cart with coal and bring it back along the rough road.

Then, on a Sunday, well it was Church day - very religious. The Presbyterian, Methodist and the Catholic and the Church of England - they all had their services. I was christened in the Church of England but I always went to the Presbyterian. Anyway, Gran would say to me, 'the Minister is coming up at 11 o'clock today, you go down to the Sunday School'. At 11 o'clock, the Minister would come, you'd be there for church. Then at 3 o'clock, away you'd go down again to the Methodists, Sunday School there and church ... Then if it was a warm night you'd go all the way down the mountain and go to the Church of England. She was pretty religious. And I wasn't allowed to do anything at all. Wouldn't let me do a thing, couldn't work, couldn't do nothing. Make me read the Bible.⁴⁷

'Going to Sunday School' seems to have remained a ritual of growing up well into the 1930s. Increasingly, parents did not go to church but they still sent their children along. Some, such as West Happgood stopped attending early, when he was about seven. Others continued into their teenage years even though, like Douglas Harrigan, they would have much preferred to be swimming or going out on their bikes. The church and Sunday School also remained as a focus on social activities. Church bazaars and fetes now complemented the tradition of the Sunday School picnic. The churches, both Catholic and Protestant, also organised a number of juvenile balls and fancy dress dances. Accommodation with modern trends only went so far, however. Throughout the inter-war years, the local Protestant churches fought a generally losing battle to keep Sunday free of sport. As one group at Helensburgh claimed in 1939,

A Sunday sports meeting is a counter attraction to children and young people in the Sunday Schools and churches. In these difficult days, we should think of building up the moral fibre

of the people and believe that the holding of Sunday sports meetings is not conducive to this ... 48

During the 1920s there emerged a number of youth movements in the Illawarra region which had similar aims to those of the churches. The most important of these was the Boy Scouts. Established in England in 1908, the Scouting movement had been exported throughout the British Empire, and to the United States. The movement began in Wollongong in August 1922 when the Reverend Knox of the Church of England formed a troop. That soon folded but two of the troop's Scouts helped form another at Port Kembla in August 1923. From then on, much of the stimulus to scouting in the Illawarra came from the efforts of C.F.T. Jackson who was to become Scoutmaster at Port Kembla and later South Coast District Scoutmaster. At the request of Kelso King, director of E.R. & S. and also chairman of the State Executive Committee of the Scouts, Jackson had come to Port Kembla to take up a position with the E.R. & S. company and also help the development of Scouting. By 1926 there were 306 Illawarra Scouts. It was the aim of the Scouts, Jackson claimed at the annual meeting that year, to provide training in 'Character Building, Health, the Making of a Career and Service to Others. The training made its appeal to the Boy by the extensive outdoor games and activities, which instilled self reliance, resourcefulness, manliness and good sportsmanship into the boys'.⁴⁹

The movement continued to expand, having a total membership on the South Coast of over 500 by the early 1930s, and 1000 by 1939. There was continuous assistance from businessmen's and service clubs such as Rotary, and particular assistance from A.S. Hoskins, of Australian Iron and Steel. Hoskins organised industries and tradesmen from Port Kembla to build a scout camp at 'Rocky Barn' at Avondale, which was opened in 1936. In June 1938, Hoskins himself suggested a more permanent camp at Mount Keira. The steelworks agreed to lease 550 acres for one pound per annum, and the Mount Keira Scout Camp was opened officially in November 1940.⁵⁰

South Coast Scouting
Census Returns

| | 1924 | 1929 | 1934 | 1935 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of Groups | 3 | 16 | 21 | 25 |
| Wolf Cub Packs | 3 | 14 | 18 | 18 |
| Boy Scout Troops | 3 | 14 | 21 | 23 |
| Rover Scouts Crews | - | 1 | 7 | 6 |
| | | | | |
| Wolf Cubs | 53 | 168 | 294 | 235 |
| Boy Scouts | 70 | 231 | 329 | 388 |
| Rover Scouts | - | 5 | 56 | 60 |
| Scouts | 7 | 31 | 67 | 68 |
| Total Membership | 130 | 435 | 708 | 711 |

Source: South Coast Scouting, No. 70, August 1935.

Despite its high public profile, Scouting's association with industrial and business interests caused some resentment in Illawarra. In April 1928, some members of the Bulli Council, responding to a request

from the Boy Scouts for a public meeting to explain their organisation, suggested that the Association should disband. The Scouts' celebration of Empire Day also seemed to many in the district an indication of where its loyalties lay.⁵¹

These, however, were adult concerns. Whatever its official aims, Scouting touched the lives of a significant number of the young in the Illawarra region. Its membership in 1934 of 583 Wolf Cubs and Boy Scouts (representing all of the South Coast, but located principally from Stanwell Park to Kiama) was about 25% of the ten to fourteen year old age group in the region as revealed at the 1933 Census. Those in the movement seem to have attended each weekly meeting on a regular basis. In 1930, the annual report of the local Scouts could claim: 'It is very pleasing to know that the average attendance of Scouts for the whole district during this year was 72 per cent and the Cubs 76.33%. This is excellent'. The terms of reference were appropriate for scouting was in many ways a form of schooling outside school. The movement sought to organise the time of youth in what was considered appropriate training. There were also awards, gradings and hierarchies similar to school organisation. As C.T. Jackson also suggested in 1926, 'Most of the training was done through games which had a definite object'. In effect, despite its specific outdoor activities such as camping, the Illawarra Scouts also participated in such activities as sports days, soccer matches and surf carnivals. Those who joined may well have had a number of related outdoor interests. As one example, Ces Bright of Capo belonged to the Cubs and the Scouts and for a short period went on into the Rovers. But he also played competition cricket and Rugby League.⁵²

The Girl Guides had a similar purpose to the Scouts. It was also related closely to those same interests that sponsored the scouting movement. In the mid-1920s, the State Secretary and later High Commissioner of the Girl Guides Association in New South Wales was Miss Kelso King, daughter of the director of E.R. & S. who sponsored the scouts. As with the Scouts, many of the leaders and supporters of the Guides were often school teachers, one of the earliest being Miss Graham, 'the popular teacher of cooking at the Technical School'. Apart from regular fetes and tea-parties, the Guides also had their own camps with activities deemed appropriate to their sex.

The first Wollongong Girl Guides, under the leadership of Captain Buckland, held a field day at Dobbie's Bush last Saturday. On arrival at the site, the patrols arranged their corners and prepared their cooking fires. Instructional games were then played, lasting until 6 o'clock. The girls set to work, each patrol cooking their own hot tea. Great rivalry was experienced between each patrol, occasioned by their combined efforts. The Blue Wren patrol received special commendation for their table arrangements, the Christmas Bells for their carefully constructed fire place and the Rangers for their most camp-like corner.

The big camp fire for the night was erected under the supervision of Captain Buckland. At dusk the camp fire was lit, accompanied by an impressive ceremony and generally enjoyment was experienced by all, due to the acting and singing of the whole company.⁵³

In some respects, the Scouts and Girl Guides were only building on what Illawarra youth had always done in quite unorganised ways. Getting out into the nearby bush or going to the surf remained favourite pastimes. At Woonona, before the First World War, Roy Colman and his mates 'kept to the mountain-side', catching possums and rabbits or just exploring the bush. Much of the natural environment was still untouched for those such as Arthur Rees growing up at Woonona in the early 1920s.

I spent a lot of my time in the bush ... the trees met overhead and the water was crystal clear and there were birds' nests hanging from the trees. There were tree ferns, and nest ferns, and staghorns ... The bush had great monkey ropes (banas) ... we used to cut them and swing on them, pretend we were Tarzan of the Apes and things like that ... And then there were Lilly Pilies to eat in the bush, and wild cherries ... There were so many wonderful things to see and do in the bush. When I was a young man I could go to the top of the escarpment and it was like walking into a garden. There were Christmas Bells, Jockey Club, Waratahs, Chocolate Flowers ... (which) smelled just like a freshly opened box of chocolates. It was just like a huge garden. There were heaths, pink and white, Rennel flowers, and so many native flowers over the top of the escarpment. 54

Even in industrial Port Kembla in the 1930s, Avis Bright could also still enjoy the sandhills and beaches.

I spent most of my childhood over at the beach ... we used to love to go around the rocks ... we'd take our lunch over there when we were on holidays on Saturdays, and we would play over there, you didn't have a lot of things to play with, so we would have shells and the greatest thing that we used to enjoy was climbing up the big sandhills ... they were just so high that it would take us so long to climb up the top and then we'd slide down ... 55

Increasingly there would be other man-made attractions, although few could provide the same sense of natural beauty and adventure. The cinema first came to Wollongong about 1910. For Bill Waldron, who lived on the outskirts of Wollongong in 'big paddock', without too many mates close by, the arrival of the cinema provided the opportunity for various forms of amusement. Going to the 'Saturday flicks' soon became another childhood ritual:

I always used to be up there at the pictures because I used to follow the serials ... I used to like Mary Pickford. It used to be open air first, up on the corner of Burrelli Street and Kera Street. It was only tin and some of the local blokes there would have a nail or something and put a hole in the tin. You'd go up there, some of them didn't have any money, you mightn't have any money yourself. You'd take a walk up there, 'cause you didn't live far away, and you'd be looking there and you'd be watching them and the next thing you'd get a boot in the pants - it'd be the chucker-out bloke telling you to get home. And to make matters worse, all right, you'd have him on. So you'd get a stick and run along the corrugated iron. 56

For much of this period, adults were also eager to 'improve' the natural and man-made environment in the supposed interests of themselves and their children. The 1920s were the heyday of various Local Progress Associations pressuring local government to improve and extend parks and build swimming pools along the beaches. They were particularly active in the Bulli Shire, as efforts were made to improve the community life of the mining villages and also provide some attractions for the tourists who came for day trips or extended holidays. As early as 1913, action had been taken to establish public recreation grounds and a surf club at Thirroul beach. A year later the Avauammer Progress Association and Surf Club approached the Council with a view to resuming part of the Allen estate to allow for

the excavation of the swimming pool for children, maintenance of a Life Saver for the Beach, protection of the natural flora as much as possible, securing of additional dressing

shed accommodation, cutting of a trail to Sublime Point on the Mountain and the planting of suitable shade trees about the town end beach.⁵⁷

After the war, in 1920, the Council agreed to purchase land at Austinmer for the purpose of providing better bathing facilities and public recreation. At the same time, there was co-operation with the Department of Lands to develop further the park at Thirroul. Throughout the 1920s there were constant appeals to improve parks and bathing facilities along the coastal beaches. There were also efforts to provide better sporting facilities, and allow sporting and other clubs access to Council grounds.⁵⁸

In Wollongong the Council had inherited from the nineteenth century a commons area of 84 acres at the entrance of Tom Thumb lagoon. There was also Stuart Park near North Wollongong Beach. In the 1920s, the Council gave considerable attention to the separate male and female bathing areas first established in 1891. Control of swimming and surf beaches became an important function of Council activities. As part of their programme of improvements, all the local Councils tried to maintain and enforce public order and decorum in various ways. In 1907, the Northern Illawarra Council was informed of the 'habit indulged in by men at Townadgi Creek bathing in a nude state in view of the public'. The police were urged to take action. Fifteen years later, the Town Clerk was instructed to write again to the police 'asking them to take action with regard to persons bathing naked or improperly clothed - from the bridge at Payne's Parade, also at Townodgi' (sic). In Wollongong itself the Council's Parks and Baths Committee resolved in 1928

With regard to the complaint lodged in connection with bathers walking through public streets in bathing costumes, we recommend that three notice boards be obtained and erected at the Beaches and Baths, and that the Police be requested to take action against any person found in a public street clad only in bathing costumes.⁵⁹

It all seemed to add up to greater public supervision of leisure time activities. Yet enforcement was another matter. Arthur Rees and his friends could still find in the 1920s creeks around Woonona where they could swim naked, away from adult eyes. Even in Wollongong the Council was complaining in 1933 of a 'growing tendency' to walk through public streets clad only in 'a very meagre bathing costume'.⁶⁰

In general, attempted control of behaviour of the young and others had its limits. Even the police concern during the First World War over loitering in the streets could not totally prevent the young from mingling together and having their own fun. Bill Waldron recalls that there were often gatherings together of youths on the streets of Wollongong.

They would meet in various parts of Crown Street Wollongong, Western Rugby Football Club in one area, Wollongong Glebe Rugby Football Club not far away, with Keira not far away. From memory I think it was on Friday nights. The usual talk was their football. Those days nobody had much money and most worked on poorly paid jobs. Those days Police used to do all foot patrols up and down Crown Street so if it was a bit cold the young fellows would seek shelter in the doorways of shops for their talk. You would be asked to move to the edge of the footpath by the Police. One in particular, Police Constable Phil Bennett I remember well if it was getting late and you were still standing about, had a favourite saying as he approached, "Are you boys going home or coming with me?" As the

police station was not far away we would all go home.

In such ways the Illawarra young found ways of living with adult authority.

By their mid-teens, most Illawarra children had left school and were entering the adult world of paid work. Those select few who had gone on the secondary school could at least believe that their opportunities in life had expanded. Attending Wollongong High was an avenue to a white collar job. Most of the first entrants of 1917 later indicated their intended occupations. Amongst boys, more than a third would be looking for jobs in commerce. A few intended to go on to university or college. Amongst girls, many would still stay at home but almost a third wanted to go into teaching, one of the few career opportunities open to girls.

In time, many ex-Wollongong High students joined the teaching profession, so many in fact that Wollongong became known as 'the nursery of the teachers'. One was Eileen James. She had attended Wollongong High in the 1920s, travelling by train from Bulli. She dropped science after the Intermediate examination but went on to complete the Leaving Certificate and attend Sydney Teachers' College in the late 1920s. Because of her height, she was chosen to undertake kindergarten training. Unlike most of her contemporaries, she would return to Illawarra to marry and settle down. For many others, teaching and other white collar jobs were the way out of the district. It was only the coming of continuous industrial growth in the Second World War that would change this situation. Joan Auburn left Wollongong High over a decade after Eileen James, in 1942, having studied science. With so many males at war, she was soon employed in laboratory work at C.R.M. in Port Kembla. Here she would stay for six years.⁶²

Intended Occupations of High School Leavers — Male
c. 1920

| Occupation | Wollongong High | | N.S.W. | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------|--------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| Pastoral/Agricultural | 8 | 5.0 | 68 | 8.0 |
| Commercial | 58 | 35.4 | 236 | 28.3 |
| Trades | 8 | 5.0 | 95 | 11.8 |
| Unskilled | 11 | 6.8 | 32 | 3.9 |
| Professional | 4 | 2.5 | 124 | 15.4 |
| Other | 8 | 6.0 | 1 | 0.1 |
| University | 7 | 4.4 | 84 | 10.4 |
| College | 2 | 1.2 | 14 | 1.7 |
| Teacher Training | 8 | 5.0 | | |
| Other School | 20 | 12.6 | 23 | 2.8 |
| Not Stated | 18 | 11.3 | 131 | 16.2 |
| | 158 | | 805 | |

Intended Occupations of High School Leavers — Females
c. 1920

| Occupation | Wollongong High | | N.S.W. | |
|------------------|-----------------|------|--------|------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| Home Duties | 36 | 30.7 | 229 | 37.2 |
| Professions | - | | 115 | 18.8 |
| 'Occupations' | 14 | 12.2 | 118 | 19.1 |
| University | 4 | 6.5 | 8 | 1.3 |
| Colleges | 7 | 7.9 | 3 | 0.4 |
| Teacher Training | 36 | 31.5 | 129 | 20.9 |
| Other School | 8 | 7.0 | 13 | 2.1 |
| Not Stated | 10 | 8.7 | - | |
| | 114 | | 615 | |

Note: Based on Register of 1917 Wollongong entrants and of 1920 School Leavers in the State.

Source: AONSW 1/7368, Wollongong High Register 1917-20, and Report of Minister of Public Instruction 1920, pp.25-26 in *NSWPP*, 1922, Vol. I

The majority of Illawarra children were denied any such opportunities. Those fortunate enough to have parents in commerce, such as Arthur Rees or Harold David, could always enter the family business. Others had different family traditions. At Bulli, just before the First World War, Roy Coltman followed his father down the mines. Bill Waldron's first job was as a baker's boy riding the carts and helping out with pastry-making. He got sick of the smell. There were few other jobs available. Men employed at Metal Manufacturers and E.R. & S. made sure that their sons got any jobs going, but at the coke works, where Bill's father worked, few boys were put on. Eventually a friend arranged a job for him as a 'tripper' (keeping the ventilation doors working) at Coalcliff Colliery, for 6/2d. a day. He would stay in the mines until something better came along.⁶³

Work for the Illawarra young continued to be often intermittent and 'dead end'. The war brought some changes. In 1917, with his father unemployed and sick, Ces Bright left Technical School after six months to take a job as a salesman. For most Illawarra girls, prospects remained even more difficult, although the growth of population after the First World War and the coming of the Second World War helped a little. Molly McGoldrick in 1910 could only find work as a domestic. By 1942, Avis Bright could at least find work as a shop assistant. Life would change even more rapidly after the Second World War.⁶⁴

CHAPTER 5

TWENTIETH CENTURY ILLAWARRA

AFTER THE WAR

THE NEW POPULATION

The Wollongong region was transformed after the Second World War, the agent of change being mainly the planned growth of the steel industry at Port Kembla. Coal production in the previous century had significant effects on the growth and importance of Wollongong as a commercial centre. The presence of coal had been one of the chief reasons for the development of Port Kembla both as a harbour and industrial town. Yet Illawarra retained its rural appearance; even with the growth of the steelworks in the 1930s, a rigger perched at the top of a crane at Australian Iron and Steel could see Fairy Meadow and describe it as "a green countryside, dotted with little farms", in 1938.¹ The growth after the war was much more dramatic than previously. By 1966 the Wollongong municipality had reached 149,506 and by 1981 it was over 172,000, with close on 300,000 in the whole region comprising Kiama, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven and Wingecarribee and Wollongong.²

The composition of the population had changed too in the years after the war. As part of the Australian government's post-war reconstruction plans, targets of 70,000 immigrants annually had been set for Australia, with a preference for those coming from Britain. Between 1948 and 1951 nearly 414,000 migrants came to Australia from Britain, not as many as originally planned because of difficulties in regard to transport and Britain's caution about its own numbers. Australia's preference for British were then modified in the face of European needs to find new homes for displaced persons; 170,000 of these had come to Australia by 1954. The refugees had to spend two years in employment chosen by the government. Port Kembla's steel industry benefited from the D.P.s, as they were called; the 3,600 employees in 1948 grew to 6,800 in four years.

From 1952 agreements between Australia and a number of European governments, as well as continued encouragement to British families to migrate to Australia, brought an influx of 'New Australians'. They settled mostly in cities; and over 40,000, nearly 38 per cent of Wollongong's population increase up to 1966, came from people born overseas. The Australian-born section of the population of Wollongong declined in relation to the newcomers, as did the section that came from Britain. In 1968 there were 22,036 migrants from Italy, Yugoslavia, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland and Malta, and only 18,915 from Britain. By 1971 Yugoslavia was the country of origin of the largest European group, with

7,163. There were as well 6,764 who had been born in Italy, 3,810 in Germany, 2,989 in the Netherlands, 1,770 in Greece, 975 in Poland, 886 in Malta. These were the main groupings until 1966, but there were also other nationalities before 1966 and after: Czechs, Portuguese, Spanish, Lebanese, Turks, Cypriots.³ More recently there have been newcomers from South American countries, and Vietnamese have been added to the groups from Asia.

There are always difficulties for adults leaving their own country to start life again in a far off place with a different language and way of life. Even when the new arrivals have relatives, friends and a large community of people from their own mother land already in residence, there is a period of adjustment to be lived through. For those immigrants who arrived in the first ten years after the Second World War the time of adjustment was much more painful for both single and married men and for women, whether they had government assistance in migrating or whether they came independently.

Single men might live in the Karingal hostel close to the steelworks and after two lonely years of hard work and economy save sufficient money to consider marriage. Some married men arrived alone, determined to have a home before bringing the family out to Australia to be re-united. In other cases the family would come together, living in the Commonwealth hostels at Fairy Meadow or Berkley until alternative accommodation was found. Meantime the breadwinner might work far away at the Snowy River hydro-electric construction sites. Some families quite enjoyed life in the hostels and stayed for several years. But for most, whether from the United Kingdom or from Europe, the desire for a home of their own was paramount.

When the Australian government initiated its post-war immigration policy it had plans for an organisation which would provide help for the migrants in assimilating into their new environment. The organisation was to be a voluntary one, based on existing charitable groups in the community. The Good Neighbour Council began operating in 1950. In New South Wales it was known as the New Settlers' League until 1956.

Wollongong was apparently the first town in Australia to establish a committee to aid migrant assimilation. It began early in 1950, initiated by Mr Harry Box aided by the Wollongong Council at a meeting of interested individuals and community organisations. The Mayor, Mr. C. Dawson, became chairman and Harry Box the secretary of the 'New Australian Social Committee'. It organised social functions for migrants; 450 local people met 450 migrants at the first of these at the showgrounds. Committee members, usually women, visited newly-arrived migrants at the hostels to make them feel welcome. Mr. Box was always available to help migrants with problems of accommodation, employment, naturalisation, and the nomination of relatives wishing to migrate to Australia. He also helped with personal problems. He laboured for ten years in a voluntary capacity, often helping migrants from his own purse.

In the absence of a government interpreter service, most of the work was done for British and other British-speaking migrants. The non-English speaking Europeans were largely unaware of the services offered by the New Settlers' League. There were no interpreters at the hostels or at the steelworks or in any of the areas where non-English speaking people needed help to fill in forms, understand the work process, travel on public transport or buy the necessities for daily living.⁴

The problem of language was, of course, recognised by the government, and language classes

were inaugurated in conjunction with the Departments of Education in all the states. By 1969 there were thirty centres in the Wollongong area where migrants could learn basic English. In the main the teachers came from the local high schools and they taught a 'situation' method: using illustrations and the written word they would get the class of people with differing national origins to repeat simple descriptive sentences in English. These migrant English classes provided a helpful basis for further practice in real situations, whether getting to work, the work place itself or for shopping. But as the classes were held at night when the teachers could be available, shift workers and women with children could not readily attend. English was not spoken at home so the woman without school-going children could remain without the means of communicating when she needed to go shopping, so she had to rely on her husband, either to do the shopping for her or to go with her on Saturday morning.⁵

What was done by federal and state governments to aid migrants in the 1950s could not compare with the expansion that took place twenty years later. Nevertheless, what was begun in the earlier period, particularly by the local community, laid a solid foundation for the future. The Wollongong Council began its promotion of the ceremonies connected with naturalisation. The first was held in August 1954, when Mayor J.J. Kelly presided and five people became Australian citizens. The Council also fostered the displays of migrant culture, thus helping to create an atmosphere of friendship for generations of migrants.

Life for both new and older Australians became easier in the 1960s. There was a shortage of labour as Australia's post-war development reached its peak. Hot water systems, refrigerators, washing machines, and all the things that made life easier for working women and housewives became common. Television added to the entertainment and education of the family. Most families had at least one car to be used not only for getting to work but also for shopping. Each township had its supermarket and a delicatessen that stocked the European foods that enriched the eating habits of Australians. There were many big fruit and vegetable markets controlled by European-born Australians. A widening range of clubs, restaurants and coffee shops made the various ethnic groups feel more at home. There were new churches too: the Greek Orthodox, the Lutheran, the Dutch Reformed, as well as the swelling of the numbers in Catholic churches.

Migrants from non-English speaking areas forged strong links in their own ethnic communities before government funded migrant centres began operating. The community was initially most apparent in the concentration of particular ethnic groups in the place they chose to dwell. Such a concentration exists in Fairy Meadow where a large number of Italians live close to the Fraternity Club which is largely a club for Italians. Many Greek people chose Cringila and Primbée; Cringila was also the choice for Maltese, Yugoslav and then Turkish people. Kanooka on the other hand had fewer European-born and a majority of English-speaking migrants from the United Kingdom. Because it is closest to the steelworks, the largest employer, Cringila has acted as a receiving suburb for most of the ethnic groups. So it was a place of many languages and cultures; each group tried to maintain its culture in places of recreation, social functions, language classes and food outlets.

Sometimes closeness to school and church could be combined with other needs as in the case of Italians at Port Kembla, where Italian children comprised nearly 60 per cent of St. Patrick's School enrolment in 1979. The school was popular too with Portuguese parents, their children making up 12 per cent of the enrolment in the same year.⁶ While closeness to the place of work and to people of one's own kind were the first considerations for new arrivals, many moved to another street or another locality

as soon as they could. To have one's own home is a desire common to all who live in Australia, regardless of land of origin. The choice of the new location had to depend on the amount that could be saved from earnings and the price of land and house, within convenient distance from the work place, friends and the children's schools.

There were, of course, people who did not move from their original dwelling, usually because they had bought their home, or built it in a place which they still found attractive. One Macedonian left his wife and three children in Yugoslavia in 1964 and by 1988 was able to bring them to the house he had bought in Mt. St. Thomas, an area he liked because there were trees growing there and there were views of the sea.⁷ Another couple from Belgium were able to get a loan from a credit union in 1963 and built their home at Lake Heights. The neighbours included Italians, Spanish, Yugoslav, Maltese, German, English and Australian families. An Indian family which had lived in the street had moved. The Belgian woman after twenty years spoke English well and was friendly with all her neighbours. There were tensions between the others when there was no common language. The occasions on which she felt uncomfortable were those where she was the only person who could speak English and the group she was visiting spoke in its own non-English language.⁸

While Wollongong owed so much of the increase in numbers and variety of its population to immigrants, the work force was predominantly a male one. In 1973 the largest employer, Australian Iron and Steel, had 22,706 workers in its steelworks and collieries. Of these, 12,817 were Australian, 1,867 British, and 7,822 were from fifty-six other countries, the largest section being 3,400 Yugoslavs.⁹ Manufacturing, together with mining and quarrying employed nearly half Wollongong's work force. There were very few women employed; male labour predominated in most of the other areas of employment and were in equal numbers in finance, property and business services. Women outnumbered men only in the spheres of commerce, community services and recreation. But none of these were as labour intensive as those employing manual labour. Wollongong's main industries employed few women and it had few industries that largely employed women. This meant that even in the period when elsewhere women were in demand, the increased number of women in Wollongong have been under-employed and un-employed.¹⁰

For Australian and other English-speaking women without training for professional or clerical work, finding paid employment was hard enough, for women without much education who had also the disadvantage of neither understanding nor speaking English it was almost impossible. A Spanish woman who had worked in the textile industry before she came to Australia was refused similar work in Wollongong because of her lack of English. Like so many other migrant women she had to find ironing and cleaning jobs.¹¹ Others did sewing at home. The non-English speaking migrant male breadwinners usually had the jobs at the bottom end of the wage scale, where the wife could not get paid work she had to manage the family budget very frugally, especially when there was a desire to save for a home of their own.

One of the hardships experienced by most non-English speaking migrants was the insulting manner towards them of some Australians. The most common expression used was the word 'wog', applied indiscriminately to all southern and eastern Europeans, as well as to migrants from Asia Minor and India. The resentment caused by the insensitive use of the word 'wog' was shown by all those interviewed, by men and women, by young people who had left school, and by students still at high school. A Belgian woman believed that children called anybody with dark hair a 'wog'. But she had had a bitter experience

when she and her Australian husband were enquiring at a bank about a housing loan, to build on land at Warrawong. A young man in the bank had spoken disparagingly of building in the 'wog' area. A young Italian woman who had taken a degree and Diploma of Education at the University of Wollongong had received her secondary education at St. Mary's Catholic school. Here too she and her Italian and Yugoslav friends had been subject to the same racist remarks. A Spanish girl of fifteen said, "I hate the prejudice they show when they call us wogs".¹²

This was not the only expression of prejudice. The daughter of German parents, and now a teacher of mathematics at a high school, had been called a Nazi by children at primary school in the late 1950s. Later at high school she had been used as an example of the 'Aryan type' by a teacher of her class. Resentment shown towards German immigrants and others suspected of being on the side of the enemy in the Second World War was strong in the years close to the war.¹³ The Port Kembla branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation protested at the possible immigration of Poles of General Anders army on the grounds that many had fought against the allies. A report of the protest appeared in the *South Coast Times* of 29 November 1948; the same newspaper reported the signing by 'many ratepayers in the area' in March 1949 of an objection to a proposed 'Balts' camp' in South Cronulla.

The words 'reffo' or 'Balt' were used indiscriminately against anybody coming from Europe to live in Australia for several years after the war ended. Antipathy was sometimes expressed in mob violence, as one person recalled:

I can remember a scene - a terrifying scene. It was Saturday night and the family - it must have been about 6 o'clock - had gathered. We were all at home at the time, it was a cold winter's night and suddenly on the door there was this pounding and screaming and scuffling was going on on the verandah. In fact the door was being pounded upon, beaten with such strength that if my father hadn't opened it, it would have burst its hinges. And this poor, terrified man flew into the house. It took some time - I remember Dad closing the door behind him and not letting anyone else in, and this terrified chap, running around the place. When we eventually settled him down, in very broken English he explained to us that he'd been drinking down at the pub and that there had been a group of young locals, young hoods, down there, picking on him because he was European. They were calling him a 'bloody wog'. In fact, yes, of course, everyone was a 'wog' or a 'dago' who wasn't Australian. And this poor fellow - they'd waited until closing time and then they'd broken a bottle and attacked him with the broken bottle. He apparently was pretty smart and turned it against them and because he'd hurt one of the mob they were out to get him. He just ran until he saw a light and raced into our place. And they in fact terrified us because they then circled the house because we were harbouring him. And it took some talking on my father's part to get them to go home ... Eventually when the coast was clear we could let him go.¹⁴

Such open manifestations of hatred were apparently rare in the Illawarra and as the war became further away in the past this type of resentment disappeared as it had after the First World War. But dislike of people with a different culture, different habits and a different appearance from the white Anglo-Saxon prototype had a long history in Australia as elsewhere. The antipathy to newcomers could come to the surface whenever a downturn in the economy provided a threat to the livelihood of the Australian worker.

Since the A.I. & S. was the largest employer in Illawarra the largest concentration of migrant workers has been there since 1949. Though some had been skilled workers or even in business in their former life, in general they became process workers or labourers, at least for their first two years in Australia, while they were obliged to obey the dictates of the Department of Labour and National Service. This meant that they had the most unattractive jobs, as the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 19 June 1949 commented. The union which covered their work was the Federated Ironworkers' Association. While federal conferences of the union showed that the delegates would have liked the migration plan to be terminated, efforts were also made to interest the migrant workers in unionism. Material was printed in the union journal and in pamphlets in Polish, German and Italian. Links were established with migrant community groups.

In Port Kembla a migrant advisory council was established to help in explaining the benefits of belonging to the union. By 1960 migrant workers made up 37 per cent of the membership, but of the 180 union delegates in the steel industry only 29 were European born and very few migrants attended union meetings. The dirtiest and most unpleasant jobs were also the lowest paid so they did as much overtime as possible, and as union meetings were held at night it was often not possible to attend. When they did it was very difficult to take part in discussions unless their English was fluent.

By 1966 when the number of wage workers at the steelworks was 14,837, only 8,220 were Australian born; of the 9,317 born overseas 1,974 were from the United Kingdom.¹⁵ Half the work force experienced varying degrees of difficulty in understanding written and spoken instructions in a work place that was always dangerous. Insufficient measures were taken by the management, government and the union to improve language teaching before the 1970s. Evening classes at Karingal and elsewhere were not adequate for men on shift work or overtime, or exhausted after day work. 'There were improvements in the 1970s. The A.I. & S. increased its multilingual safety notices and printed the safety handbook in the workers' own languages; it also constituted an Employee Advisory Referral scheme and began having language lessons on the job. The Port Kembla branch of the Federated Ironworkers Association elected the Italian-born Nando Lelli as assistant secretary in 1970 and as its secretary two years later. Lelli was determined 'to do something constructive towards solving the problems faced by newcomers to Australia'.¹⁶ The union campaigned for language classes, stepped up the printing of multi-language material, strengthened its clerical staff with persons who could speak a language other than English and appointed a welfare officer who could understand five languages. Under Lelli's leadership the union also pushed the employment of women as process workers in the steel industry, something that could not have been done without union co-operation. In 1983 the union co-operated with the South Coast Labour Council in producing a book for migrant women workers, printed in Macedonian, Greek and English.¹⁷

The 1970s also had seen a much greater attention given by government agencies to migrant needs. Ethnic matters became linked with immigration in the Immigration and Ethnic Affairs department of the Commonwealth government. The Adult Migrant Education service, organised by the New South Wales government, opened centres at Cringila, Fairy Meadow and Wollongong. A Home Tutor Service is of great help to women both in language and in contact between Australian and migrant women. The Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales gives advice and aid in the area of interpreting, translation and community liaison. Cringila has its community co-operative for European migrants, Fairy Meadow its Settlement Centre for the more recently arrived Vietnamese. There is a Migrant Resources Centre in Wollongong and the University has a Centre for Multicultural Studies which promotes research into migrant needs and problems, education and culture. In addition to the bodies established by federal,

state or local governments there are over 80 cultural or educational associations maintained by the different ethnic groups.¹⁸

HOUSING AND SUBURBAN EXPANSION

The desire for a home of one's own was not confined to newcomers to Illawarra. It was part of the 'Australian dream' and it was stimulated by the growth of population after the war and the insufficiency of rented accommodation, exacerbated by war and post-war shortages of building materials. Overall, if close-knit community life in mining villages and cramped living in Wollongong had been two of the main features of inter-war Illawarra, then it would seem that suburban expansion and home ownership were characteristics of post-1939 Illawarra. During the inter-war years many Illawarra families had continued to live in sub-standard housing.

Even allowing for closely settled mining villages, the proportion of families in the Wollongong district owning their own home had also been one of the lowest in the state. In 1933, less than one-third of private dwellings in Wollongong municipality itself were either owned or being bought by their occupiers. In contrast, the proportion in Sydney was over 40 per cent and in the steel city of Newcastle almost half. The establishment of new building societies in the late 1930s did encourage newly married couples to buy a block and build their own home but the difficult housing situation would continue throughout the war and into the post-war years.¹⁹ A report of the housing committee of the Central Illawarra Shire in 1943 indicated that there was still 280 shacks in the general area around Port Kembla:

The necessity for homes is impressed on the visitor to this district by the large number of bag and tin shanties, in which employees of the various industries are forced to live and rear families under unhygienic conditions, undermining the health of the occupants. Such environment can only lead to the demoralization of the children, destroying that ambition which it is desired to instil in every Australian to live a good, noble and righteous life.²⁰

At first, post-war restrictions and shortages of building materials hindered efforts to improve the situation.

Much of the new housing settlement of the late 1940s and early 1950s occurred in older established areas such as Bulli-Woonona and Fairy Meadow. It was not until the more continuous economic growth of the 1950s-1960s that there was a marked change. The growing Illawarra population now moved out into new areas, particularly to the south of Wollongong in such suburbs as Berkeley, Dapto and Warilla. Newcomers to the district made strenuous efforts to acquire their own homes, often with both husbands and wives working to pay off mortgages.

The state itself assisted this suburban growth. From the 1940s to 1973 the Housing Commission built 9,291 houses and 722 flats in the district, over 80 per cent in the suburbs south of the city. Overall, the amount of residential land more than doubled from 21.03 square kilometres to 52 square kilometres. By the 1970s, the Greater Wollongong area had one of the higher home-ownership rates in New South Wales, surpassing Sydney, and even catching up to older established Newcastle.²¹

Home Ownership
Percentage of Private Dwellings

| | 1947 | 1954 | 1961 | 1966 | 1971 | 1976 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Sydney | 39.7 | 55.7 | 67.8 | 71.8 | 67.3 | 65.1 |
| Newcastle | 60.1 | 72.9 | 80.0 | 79.1 | 75.1 | 72.3 |
| Wollongong | 38.7 | 43.8 | 41.1 | 70.0 | 68.0 | 65.7 |
| Total N.S.W. | 48.1 | 47.1 | 48.4 | 71.8 | 67.8 | 65.4 |

SOURCE: J.C. Docherty, *Selected Social Statistics of New South Wales 1961-1976*

Historical Statistics Monograph No. 1, Kensington History Project Incorporated, 1982, p. 34

Such were the general patterns of suburban expansion. But what of the effect upon individual families? Initially, the lives of those growing up in the Illawarra region in the two decades after 1938 were not very different from those of the earlier generation in the early to mid-twentieth century. Certainly, comforts in the family home changed only slowly. Even in the more settled areas, many families still lived in poor circumstances during the war and beyond. For newcomers and migrants circumstances were also often difficult.

Joyce Crichter was born at Corinal in 1935, youngest in a family of six children. Her father worked as a miner, still arriving home in the 1940s, 'black' (there being no washing facilities at the mines). The family lived in a house which they rented and later bought from another family living only a block away. It was almost bare of furniture. Throughout the house there were mats made from old material. Joyce at first slept on a camp stretcher just behind the door of her parents' bedroom. The family usually gathered in the kitchen to sit on an odd assortment of furniture. 'Other than the bedrooms there was nowhere else to go'. Her father was a political activist and above the kitchen mantlepiece during the war years hung a picture of Lenin and Stalin, 'which didn't go down with my brothers very well when they were bringing home their girl friends'.²²

When Joyce was growing up, the Crichters had few surviving relatives nearby. What they did have was a circle of close friends who had gone through the Depression with them, when Joyce's father had built homes out of bark in the area known as 'Happy Valley' at Corinal. It was a community they could call on in times of need.

The Mannixes in Kenny Street, Wollongong, also had few contacts with their relatives, most of whom now lived in Sydney. Brian Mannix was born in 1935, eldest son of a construction worker and later draughtsman at the steelworks. (Brian had a brother and a sister born later.) The family had a small-goods shop during the war and his mother later worked as a cleaner when his father broke his back. The Mannixes owned their weatherboard, iron-roofed home which was rather better furnished than the home of Joyce Crichter, although Brian still shared a bedroom. The family still congregated in the kitchen to talk and listen to the radio. Every Sunday during the war the air raid siren at 1 p.m. would see them all rush into the lounge room to sit underneath the upturned couch (there was another, underground, shelter in the back yard).²³

Other families had arrived in the region during the war. The father of Sue Zweep, who was born in

Wollongong in 1941, had been sent by his firm. Later, he went into business on his own as a car dealer. The family owned their home: a nine-roomed comfortable house at Thirroul. Sue was the only child in the house, although her grandmother lived with them for a while. The furniture in her own room included a dressing table and wardrobe. The house stood on four large building blocks surrounded by fruit trees, vegetables and a garage.

When the family of Patricia McAlear came to Wollongong in 1941 they had to rent a one-roomed flat. Patricia had been born in 1935 in Adelaide, the first of two daughters. Her father was a wharfie who worked long hours. He died when Patricia was aged about ten. Her mother then worked in cafes, washing, cleaning and later cooking. After moving a number of times, the family had settled in Church Street, Wollongong, living in a two-bedroom weatherboard home which they eventually bought. Patricia shared her bedroom with her sister, sleeping on a camp stretcher and keeping her clothes in cupboards made out of butter boxes. Outside the house there was still some room for 'chooks' and a vegetable garden.²⁴

Pensions were still a normal part of life for many children growing up in these wartime and early post-war years. Shortages following the war hampered the construction of new homes. For the newly-arrived from overseas there were the government hostels which would be the first home for most government-assisted migrants until well into the 1960s. As one of the first group of assisted migrants, many German-born people lived at first in the migrant hostel at Fairy Meadow and then in rented accommodation. Yet within five years almost two-thirds of one particular sample of German families were owner-occupiers, buying and building homes, first just north of Wollongong at Fairy Meadow or around Thirroul-Wombarra, and then to the south towards Oak Flats and Shellharbour, where land was cheap.²⁵

Some bought old mining cottages on company land in Wombarra. One couple with four young children bought a block of land in the foothills above Coledale. An electrical engineer, the man built, single-handed, a one room dwelling from blocks of sandstone cemented together. He worked at the Snowy River, driving back in the weekends to add out-house, toilet, laundry, and a stand for a water-tank. His wife was a well-educated woman who had always lived in cultured Vienna circles. She suffered acute loneliness in many ways. Her only comfort, as she reared the children without her husband's support during the week, were her books and the friends she made through the children going to school, and her meetings with their teachers.

Another man from Germany, living at the Berkley hostel and working as a bricklayer at Lysaghts, bought cheap land on the outskirts of Lake Heights. He built a garage and arranged for his fiancee to migrate from Hamburg. She, and thirty other single women from Germany, had been given no idea by the Immigration Department representatives in Germany of what to expect in Australia except that they would find employment as servants or waitresses. At Lake Heights, when she married, there were only five or six houses, there was no electricity or running water, and in her garage home the furniture consisted of a few crates, a primus stove and a kerosene lamp.

There were similar difficulties for British migrants. Tony Conlon arrived from Manchester in 1957, aged twelve. His father was a toolmaker who had become disillusioned with post-war England. He first went to Canada alone, sending back money to the family in England. Then the Conlon family of two adults and three children migrated to Australia. They arrived at Berkley hostel in the depths of the night. Their home for the next few years would be a hostel hut.

I can never forget the sight the first time we walked in. The manager opened the door for us... there were no light switches; there were strings hanging down. We walked into the room and he pulled the string for the first one and the light bulb didn't go on, so he went across and pulled the next one and it was a forty-watt globe, and we had this square laminex table with these chromed chairs with laminex backs and laminex seats that came down in a funny angle, and six knives and forks and cups and a toilet roll all sitting on this table, and there was nothing else but us and cockroaches. My brother and I used to get up and empty all the drawers and cupboards every morning so that Mum wouldn't find any cockroaches. And we used to catch around about thirty a morning. First time I'd even had fleas in my life, I came from relatively bed places in England but I never had fleas until I came out here.²⁶

The hostel huts had little insulation, few windows and no fly screens. 'You froze in winter and cooked in summer'. In Tony's section of the camp, 74 people shared three toilets, three showers, a bath and four hand basins. Most families in Berkeley Hotel were from Britain. Some could not stand the conditions and returned home. Tony Conlon and his family stuck it out, with both parents working. Eventually they were able to save enough money to buy a block and build a new home at Lake Heights.

In contrast, the Rupertos were unassisted migrants from Italy. The father of John Ruperto, who was born in 1952, came from Calabria where he had been a rural labourer. He and John's elder brother arrived first in Queensland in the 1950s to work in the canefields, but he decided to move to Wollongong, bringing out the rest of the family. They lived at Cringila so as to be close to the steelworks where John's father worked. Formerly known as Steeltown, an Australian-born community, including the future Lord Mayor, Frank Arkell, had grown up in Cringila in the 1930s-1940s. In 1960 it had been decided to designate Cringila a light industrial area, leading to fears of homes and families being displaced. In effect many migrant families congregated in Cringila where property was cheap. By the mid-1950s there was concern about overcrowding and insanitary living conditions. There were few social services or amenities provided and the roads were unsealed. Most of all there was the ever-present soot from the stacks of the steelworks. John Ruperto's mother hated Cringila. 'Every time she put the washing out she didn't get it in before a nor'easter came in and she had it all covered in black and red soot. On many occasions I can remember Mum going out and cursing the steelworks'. Eventually the family moved to a larger house in Bligh Street, Wollongong. This home the Rupertos paid off quickly because John's father could not stand to pay the high interest rates of the building society.²⁷

Born in 1950, Adrianna Lucato also arrived in Wollongong with her family in 1958. Her father was a bricklayer and she had two brothers and a sister, all younger than she. Her father and a friend bought a home together so that they could jointly pay off the mortgage. Later they moved to their own home in Reservoir Street, Port Kembla. As with the Rupertos and most other Italian families, home ownership was a prime aim. It provided the property many had been unable to acquire in Italy, while also securing a future. The home was still small, with Adrianna having to live in the lounge room with her sister. The garage was also let out to another family. The block of land was at least large, with room to grow vegetables and keep 'chooks'. In the house itself, Adrianna's mother still washed by hand and cooked over a wood fire.²⁸

For European women life was often depressing in the first few years after coming to Australia. One German woman had been an assistant manager in a stocking and underwear shop in Hamburg. But largely because of her language difficulty this type of work was not available so she did cleaning

and ironing to earn the money for the couple's daily living. Her husband's earnings, first from Lysaghts, then from the steelworks, were put aside for the building of their home. For the three years before the coming of electricity and a water supply for the area, they felt like pioneers. And even though more German-speaking people came to live nearby she was very lonely. It was partly because there did not seem to be a close community bond; there were no organised social activities she could remember amongst these hard-working people. But her main difficulty was her isolation with her children far from her own mother. Her isolation, loneliness and non-understanding of the language spoken in the shop, in the buses, and in the Wollongong Hospital where her children were born, made her very nervous. She could not go to the shop without her husband until she made a determined effort to become more independent. As with most of the men working in industry her husband too had difficulty in learning English - though their difficulties were not as great as those of their wives. In the absence of German interpreters in Wollongong until the 1960s, whenever they had problems such as questions about becoming naturalised they had to go to Sydney to see the West German Consul. They knew nothing about the work of Mr. Box for 'New Settlers' in Wollongong.²⁹

Life improved when the children went to school. The first girl could speak English quite well after a few months. This helped the mother and the other two girls to learn too, as did the acquisition of television with all the language spoken being English, with, of course, no subtitles. Another great benefit from the children attending school was that the mother began mixing with other women in the Mothers' Club and the school canteen. She continued with her carabin work when the girls attended high school, and ultimately gained employment as an assistant in the Home Science department.

Gradually new communities did emerge even in difficult circumstances. Cringia had the nickname in the 1960s of 'Chicago' because of the concentration of Italians and other Europeans who established their own shops and often social networks. In Port Kembla, because she could not speak English, the mother of Adrienne Lucato shopped at 'New Australian' premises, whether Italian or not. There was also a community life in the hostels. When the Conlons moved out to Lake Illawarra they still maintained contact with a circle of friends from the Berkeley hostel.

In all Illawarra households there was also the maintenance of older traditions amidst the forging of new ones. Many time-honoured rituals remained in place. Only in the 1980s did the mass introduction of washing machines allow for some ease of labour in washing dirty clothes. Until then, women had to work with coppers, tubs and mangles. It was no wonder that a whole day, usually Monday, was set aside for the family wash. On the next day there was all the ironing to do. Often there were also regular days still set aside for shopping and baking. In the households of the overseas-born there were meals different from those of the usual Australian diet (pasta rather than lamb chops, for instance) but the weekly routine in all Illawarra homes was increasingly governed as much by local work habits as by home-grown or imported values. In an effort to accumulate money for a home deposit, Tony Conlon's parents both worked shifts and shopped together when they could. Adrienne Lucato's father worked varying rosters and took his wife shopping on his days off. Compared to earlier generations, however, children now occupied a less important role in the household economy. Their 'shares' were now generally confined to washing up the dirty dishes or helping out in the garden.³⁰

In contrast, one of the major rituals of childhood in the 1940s and 1950s was the general continuance of corporal punishment in the home, particularly in working class households. Sometimes parents seemed irrational, as Patricia McAlear found out when she picked her father's geraniums:

I could never work out why I got a hiding over that ... I picked a few geraniums, stuck them in the tops of my shoes and thought I was the art's pants, dancing around the grass and he came home from work and seen me and God I got a hiding. I could never work out why. It was all so stupid 31

As a middle class child, Sue Zweep was not beaten, but was 'shamed' for hurting or upsetting her parents. She was 'mortified' at being hit once in front of guests for being rude. In John Ruperto's Australian-Italian home, both parents would use the strap for mischief or dishonesty. Overall, in the homes of both Australian-born and overseas-born parents, children were expected to respect parental authority.

Until the 1960s at least, most children were also required to follow the traditional religious observances. An exception was the household of Joyce Critcher where her father, a committed atheist and member of the Communist Party, actually forbade his family to attend church, even though his wife was a Seventh Day Adventist. None of the children was baptised, although Patricia did attend Salvation Army meetings in Sydney and one of her sisters later became a Catholic. Elsewhere, in the households of most of the Australian-born, children continued to go to Sunday School if they were Protestant, or Mass if they were Catholic. The Anglican family of Patricia McAlear were 'pretty religious', they did not say grace at meals but had to go to the local church. Only after her husband died did Patricia's mother become 'pretty hostile' towards a religion which seemed to help little. Patricia herself for a while went to a Catholic school but she still 'used to fight like hell' with some Catholic children on the bus and play games with others when she came home.³² Brian Mannix, a Catholic, was also aware of fights between 'Protes' and 'Cathos'. In his home there was a feeling that the children should associate only with those of their own faith.

Such disputes had their origin in an earlier period of Australian history. They had little meaning for new arrivals from overseas. Immigrants, particularly those from Southern Europe, brought in their own religious traditions of feast days and anniversaries of saints. The process of transition was not always easy. When living in Cingilia in the 1960s, the Ruperto family caught a bus to attend church at Unanderra, then the only Illawarra Catholic church where Italian was spoken. Once the family moved to Wollongong they gave up going to church until the Italian Centre was opened in the city. John himself eventually stopped attending church principally because he had lost his knowledge of Italian and was unable to communicate.

Coming from the different background of English Protestantism, Tony Conlon also found that the move to Australia changed his religious habits. In England, he had attended church regularly. Much of his social life revolved around a church-based community, taking part in the Boys' Brigade and the choir (with practice three times on Sunday). In Australia, he stopped going to church because there now seemed no purpose. Located in a small building, only 12 feet by 12 feet, the Berkley Church of England had none of the active community and street life of Manchester. 'Everything about Berkley was boring'. In starting a new life, Tony and many other British and non-British child migrants often found that initially they had lost as much as their parents hoped to gain.³³

GROWING SCHOOLS

One of the main features of growing up in inter-war Illawarra was overcrowded schools. If any-

thing, the situation became worse in the immediate post-war period. As in the area of housing, post-war shortage of building materials made it difficult to keep up with the demands of a growing population. During the war, there had been much discussion throughout Australia about the need for a reconstructed educational system.³⁴ In Wollongong, a group known as the New Deal for Education Committee, with delegates from P. and C. Associations, trade unions and other bodies had been formed to press for educational improvements.³⁵ Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s the committee and other organisations urged the State Government to take immediate action to relieve overcrowding in the Illawarra region. In some of the older schools there was considerable pressure. At Fairy Meadow the enrolment grew from 398 in 1948 with an average class load of 46 to 700 in 1951 with a class load of 47. It was not until 1953 that numbers stabilised at Wollongong Primary School with an enrolment of around 1,000.³⁶

The building of new primary schools helped ease the congestion but even here there were problems. In September 1954 the Warrawong Parents' and Citizens' Association threatened a strike, to keep their children away from school as there were only 14 teachers for a population of 700 pupils. One class was being held in 'a badly ventilated and poorly lighted library', another in a 'narrow corridor'.³⁷ In 1951, steps had been taken to establish a school at Cringila, nearby to Warrawong. It was not, however, until 1965 that Cringila Primary School opened, with an enrolment of 112 infants and 43 primary school children.³⁸ In 1960, the headmaster of Cringila Primary informed an area conference of the Good Neighbour Council that 89 per cent of the children in the infants' classes and 73 per cent in the primary were of non-English speaking backgrounds. With such an influx, teachers were coping with the situation in pragmatic but often contradictory ways.

The majority of teachers say that the knowledge of English is the most important single factor in the migrant children's education. Others say that it is one of several important factors.

Teachers of classes which contain a large number of migrants take the former view. However, difficulties arise where the migrants are too few to warrant special classes in English. When they are in operation, these classes provide concentrated English lessons daily over a certain period and many teachers regard the class as a focal point in the assimilation of these children. On the other hand, some teachers consider that any special classes tend to set migrant children apart from Australians and hinder mutual acceptance. These favour help in the early stages without segregation in special classes. Yet again, others consider it advisable to 'pair' the new arrival with a child of the same nationality who has learned English, or with an Australian.³⁹

John Ruperto entered Cringila Primary in 1960. He had been to school in Italy but, because he could not speak English, he was put back a grade.

There were similar problems in Catholic schools. Adrianna Lucato had also been to school in Italy from the age of 3½ years. She started at St. Patrick's, Port Kembla when she was eight. There were 98 children in her class. She 'used to come home crying every day' because she could not speak English. Her father, the nuns and other girls helped her to read, with an Australian-born girl working with her an hour a day. It took her three to four months to learn English.⁴⁰

These were but some of the special problems of new arrivals adjusting to Australian schools. In other ways, school life in the 1940s - 1960s had not changed all that much from the inter-war years. With large classes, discipline was often severe. In Catholic schools, the religious orders, who still did much of the teaching in these years, were notorious for using corporal punishment. At St. Francis Xavier, Wollongong, in the early 1940s, Brian Mannix found that the cane was used for making errors or talking. In the 1960s, Sue Zweep went to the convent school at Thirroul, which was first held in the church itself with screens across the altar. There were four classes crammed in and only two nuns to teach them. To keep order, the nuns used whips and rulers with steel rods. Children were punished not only for such misdemeanours as talking in class, but also for failing to go to Mass on Sundays.

Other rituals of celebration mirrored previous years. For both State and Catholic schoolchildren Empire Day had more and more become commonly known as 'cracker night'. Those in charge of children, themselves brought up in an earlier generation, sometimes tried to reinterpret for a changing world. At Empire Day in 1962, the headmaster of Dapto Public School, pointing out that 90 migrant children had enrolled at his school over the previous months, stressed that

as we made friends with these new children to our schools and they became absorbed into our social life and national activities, the stronger would become the British Commonwealth of Nations.⁴¹

Connections with Britain were accentuated in 1953-1954 with the Coronation and subsequent Royal visit. Over 20,000 Illawarra schoolchildren gathered in the streets and on sports grounds to welcome the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh in February 1954.⁴² A more home-grown ritual was the continuing celebration of Anzac Day, which took on a new significance following the Second World War, particularly in the older established areas. At Corinal in the 1940s, Joyce Crichter and her class mates prepared for Anzac Day for about a fortnight. Wreaths were laid on the local monument and teachers (often ex-servicemen) and other dignitaries addressed the children on the meaning of sacrifice and the forging of nationhood at Gallipoli.⁴³

In the school playground, children still had their own rituals and games, many of which had been handed down from earlier generations. Undoubtedly, there was cruelty such as the persecution of a sub-normal girl in Joyce Crichter's days at Corinal. There were also the rhymes which had their own childhood meaning:

Mary, Mary dressed in black,
Silver buttons down the back,
She loves coffee, she loves tea,
She loves sittin' on a blackfella's knee.⁴⁴

The major post-war educational change was the establishment of universal comprehensive schooling. In 1945 Wollongong High was still the only secondary school in the region offering a full five-year course. Visiting Wollongong in 1959, in the 100th year of local government, when the Marshall Mount and the Mount Kembla primary schools were also celebrating their centenaries, the State Minister for Education, Mr. Heffron, said that his government was spending over a million pounds (\$2 million dollars) on education in that year.⁴⁵ Illawarra had shared in this increased expenditure on education: over thirty new schools appeared in the 1960s, including high schools at Corinal, Bulli, Berkeley and Dapto. In

addition the Wollongong Home Science School became Smiths Hill High School for girls in 1958, followed in 1959 by the conversion of the Junior Technical School into Kira Boys' High. Over the next two decades another thirty new schools were built in the neighbourhood of Wollongong, the emphasis being on the new areas west and south of Port Kembla. As part of the 'Wyndham plan' of 1961, Port Kembla, then Warilla and Oak Flats gained high schools, with others, north of Wollongong at Woonona and south-west of Wollongong at Figtree, in the 1960s. High schools at Lake Illawarra, Werrawong and Kanahooka followed in the 1970s.

Wollongong High Schools (New)
1954 - 1976

| | | | |
|------|-------------|------|----------------|
| 1954 | Connimel | 1963 | Warilla |
| 1956 | Bulh | 1964 | Woonona |
| 1957 | Berkeley | 1969 | Figtree |
| 1958 | Dapto | 1972 | Lake Illawarra |
| 1961 | Port Kembla | 1972 | Werrawong |
| 1962 | Oak Flats | 1973 | Kanahooka |

Source 'Illawarra Region Government Schools' adopted from J. Fletcher, J. Burnswood, *Government Schools of New South Wales 1848 - 1976*, Sydney, 1977.

Although Wollongong High remained selective in its intake until the 1970s, all the new high schools drew upon all the children in definite parts of the region. Many could now walk to high school as they had previously walked to primary school. They would have the same friends at school as at home. Not that all went smoothly. Tony Conlon entered Berkeley High School when the school was still located in Smith Street, Wollongong. When the school opened at Berkeley itself, there was a mixture of pupils from the 'high society' of Port Kembla and Windang, most of whom were in the 'A' classes, and the migrants, both British 'hostel kids' and Italians and Greeks. There were many divisions over ethnic issues, with the Australian-born making fun of migrants. Although he spoke English and was not in one of the lower grade classes, Tony identified more with the Italians and Greeks because he played soccer. The Australian-born only accepted him when he beat them at athletics.

The special needs of migrants and other groups were only slowly recognised. From the mid-1950s schooling became more diverse, with Grammaries for the handicapped, later Para Meadows, begun in 1954, and a school at the Wollongong Hospital in 1968. Because of the large number of Catholic migrants from southern Europe, the Catholic Church had both to enlarge older schools and build new ones, particularly in the secondary area. The Church of England, having established a Grammar School for boys in 1959, then leased Gleniffer Brae as S.C.E.G.S., and finally built a co-educational secondary school, the Illawarra Grammar School at Mangerton, which had to be enlarged in 1984. By 1984 there were 179 schools catering for 81,000 students. 147 of the schools were primary, 32 were secondary. 38 of the schools were described as 'private' catering for 18% of the student population.⁴⁶

By the mid-1970s, the population of every school in Illawarra contained a mixture of nationalities. In the non-government schools, as in the government ones, the proportion of children of Australian-born parents and of parents born overseas varied. In the suburbs north of Fairy Meadow, especially in the government schools, the children of the Australian-born predominated. In the Catholic schools in



HUNT KEMPT LTD., 1953

Aerial view of John Lyngate's Ltd. taken by Arthur Cratchley, Wollongong.

Sources - University of Wollongong Archives.



WOLLONGONG, c1940

Crown Street south from the intersection with Keira Street.

Source, Wollongong Public Library.



WOLLONGONG UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, 1987

Land for a university was acquired in 1969 and teaching began at the site in North Wollongong in 1982.
Formerly a college of the University of N.S.W., the University of Wollongong became autonomous in
January 1975.

Source: University of Wollongong Archives.



UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Bishop Ivan Prasko celebrating mass, 17 January 1972.

Source: Illawarra Mercury.



AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP

Wollongong Town Clerk, Ron Eggers, showing a certificate of Australian citizenship to Mr. P. Kalu, Mr. L. Del Biordo and Mr. and Mrs. Del Biordo who were naturalised on 7 December 1976

Source: Illawarra Mercury



SCOUTING MOVEMENT

Rafting on the Shoalhaven River, February 1971.

Source: Illawarra Mercury.



PORT KEMBLA HIGH SCHOOL

In June 1973, pupils at Port Kembla High School went on strike to protest against a ban on girls wearing slacks to school.

Source: Illawarra Mercury.



BELLAMBI PRIMARY SCHOOL, 1975

The Bellambi Primary School commenced teaching in January 1956. The design of the school and the use of moveable furniture reflected a less rigid approach to education.

Source: Illawarra Mercury.



FIGTREE HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Expansion of residential development in the Figtree area led to the opening of Figtree Heights Public School in 1972.

Source: N.S.W. Department of Education, South Coast Region.



WARRAWONG HIGH SCHOOL, 1983

Special programmes to teach skills not normally associated with the school curriculum were introduced at Warrawong High School. Skills taught included spray painting, brick laying and motor mechanics.

Source: K. McCarthy Collection.





TOWRADGI INTENSIVE LANGUAGE CENTRE, 1979

Vietnamese students (Keokkhone Kongdysamak, Chau Van Manh, Kha Canh Nghia and Nguyen Thi Bich Thao) from Central High School receiving instruction in the use of laboratory equipment from Mrs. Lyn Schalch.

Source: Hawara Mercury

Wollongong itself there were many children of migrants. In Port Kembla, as it has already been shown, 60 per cent of the students at St. Patrick's School had Italian or Portuguese parents. The composition of the Church of England's secondary school, Illawarra Grammar, was largely Australian, there were also many students whose overseas-born parents could afford to pay the fees at the most prestigious school in Illawarra. Others preferred to send their children to Sydney's elite boarding schools. Kanahooka High School had a preponderance of children whose parents had migrated from the United Kingdom, so the children of English-speaking parents were in the majority. In the primary and secondary schools close to the steelworks there were children of many different ethnic groups, and Australian-born English speaking parents were in the minority.

A clear example of a multi-national school is seen in Warrawong High School, established in 1972. Here in 1980 there were 958 students whose parents had 34 different national origins. Of the mothers 302 were born in Yugoslavia, 168 in Italy, 106 in Portugal, 56 in Malta, 34 in Greece, the same number as the mothers from the United Kingdom. Turkey outnumbered Germany as the birthplace, and there were more mothers from Vietnam and Cambodia than from the Netherlands. Of the 127 mothers born in Australia, 29 had married non-Australian born men - 8 from the United Kingdom, 11 from Malta and the rest from Germany, Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia. All the Portuguese women and those from Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Lebanon, Turkey and the South East Asian countries had married men from their own countries. In each of the other national groupings of mothers there were examples of 'mixed' marriages, so that some children could become fluent in three languages.⁴⁷

But many of the children, when they first started their schooling in Australia, usually at the age of five, were at a serious disadvantage because their mothers spoke no English. It was understandably very difficult for the children who heard their mother tongue until they were thrown into the strange world of school. At first in the schools as elsewhere in the community little was done to provide the non-English speaking children with special facilities for learning the new language. One teacher recalled a class of young children with several different national backgrounds. She had to learn how to handle the task of teaching them to read English the best way she could. The new primary schools of the 1960s in the Port Kembla and Lake Illawarra areas had intensive language classes for the non-English speaking children. The time taken for the children to become bilingual varied according to the personality, level of maturity and home experiences. It was obvious from the teachers' comments on the children who started school without English, that during their early months or even years at primary school they lacked confidence, waited depressed, were easily discouraged and showed frustration. It is also apparent that by the time they reached high school their language difficulties had disappeared and with them the lack of confidence which had plagued them in their school work as infants. It was usually only the first child in the family who had language difficulties. By the time the others went to school the first child's new language would have been picked up by the others, the mother too would be getting a grasp of English and with a new-found confidence she would take part in the mothers' club activities at the primary school and later help in the school canteen at the high school.

Determined efforts had to be made by the parents if they wished their children to retain the language of the older generation's home land. It usually required attendance at language classes after school or on Saturday mornings, this conflicting with the children's other out-of-school interests. While the learning of English as a second language brought greater confidence to the children, it was a mixed blessing for the family. It sometimes helped the parents, particularly the mother, in adjusting to the Australian community; but it also tended, in some cases, to undermine the confidence of the parents,

particularly the father. Where there were strong traditions of the father taking the lead in all family matters, it might seem a reversal of roles for a child to act as interpreter. Such a departure from tradition was as worrying to the father as the gradual loss of the familial language by the children.

For the first generation of Australian-born children of migrants, there were difficulties associated with growing up in a society where their parents' traditions and customs differed from those of Australian parents. This was particularly felt by girls in regard to their brothers. The girls complained that they were expected to do housework while the boys had no tasks; sometimes they had to make their brothers' beds as well as their own, and help their mothers wait on the brothers' needs both at meal times and in between meals. While the girls were expected to work hard at school their educational needs were seen as secondary to their marriage expectations. Many girls had to leave school to marry before they were eighteen. Where the girls did well at school and went on to University, they were still much more subject to parental control than were their brothers, or the daughters of Australian parents. Their fathers or brothers would ensure that their comings and goings were chaperoned. One young woman of Yugoslavian parents said she had to resist a great deal of family pressure to marry as soon as she left school. She was determined to become professionally qualified so that she could be financially independent for the rest of her life. She wanted to marry and have children; but she also wanted to retain her interests and use her qualifications to work in an interesting, well-paid occupation. She also wanted to be able to choose a husband who was not of the same race as herself if she wished. She said that most Yugoslav parents were anxious for their children, particularly their daughters, to marry within the same ethnic group. This, they believed, could prevent religious and cultural differences and enable both of the partners, particularly the wife, to communicate easily with the parents-in-law. The brother of this young woman had married an Australian girl and was already realising that he would be expected to help with the household chores.⁴⁸

Where European parents had come from country areas they were much more likely to expect their daughters to marry early and devote their lives to household tasks; they regarded the boys as future heads of such households. Where the boys had grown up regarding themselves in this way, there was often friction in a marriage, where the Australian-born wife believed in equal partnership. A group of fifteen-year old girls at the end of their fourth year at high school made some revealing comments about growing up in the Illawarra:

One was born in Australia of Spanish parents...

At first my parents found it difficult to settle here as they knew nothing of the English language, and all our relations were either back in Spain or Belgium. Attending English classes soon overcame this problem and they picked up more over the years.

I didn't have the trouble when going to school that my eldest brother did of not having the English language. I know how to speak English better than I do Spanish. At home I speak both. To my brothers and sisters I speak English. I don't know whether it has anything to do with their nationality, but they are very old-fashioned, especially my father. He insists that I attend Spanish classes and learn how to read, write and speak fluently in Spanish as it is his language. He has also adopted the attitude that being male is superior to being female. What he says and wants is what happens whether Mum or anyone else agrees. He has repeatedly said the line: "I'm the breadwinner and that makes me the head of the

house".

There are a few things I dislike about the way I have been brought up. When my eldest brother was 16 he was allowed to go out with his friends once in a while and return home late, but never near as often as his friends. My sister, 16, and I are allowed out even less than he was because we are girls. My father does not allow me to have a boy friend, and that I disagree with. Nor does he allow my sister who is nearly 17 to have a relationship with a boy. "She is far too young", he says, and "School comes first". When I oppose my father's opinions he becomes very cross and says, "While I'm your father and I'm providing you with a home and food, you'll do as I say". I become very angry when he speaks to me like that as it makes me not want to discuss anything with him. I feel that everyone is different and entitled to their own different opinions.

My mother isn't as strict and has a broader outlook on things. She doesn't mind if my sister or I see a boy as long as we are honest and tell her about it ... It is most embarrassing when all my friends come home late from parties and go out with boys and even invite them home when I can't do this. I shouldn't complain really as I do get a lot of freedom compared with other migrants.

Being the daughter of migrants is common in the Illawarra yet it was only the other day that I went to the pool and someone called out "Bloody wog" for no reason. I hate the prejudiced way of some people as I am almost as Australian as anyone, after all I was born here. Even if I wasn't Australian it's about time people accepted you for your personality and what you are - not the language you speak.⁴⁹

Another Spanish girl said:

I had problems adjusting into primary school because all I spoke at home was Spanish. I was slower than most of the class in learning because I couldn't communicate in English. I found I was attending language classes and was slowly improving and when I got to high school I improved drastically and advanced into the higher classes.

My mother had a lot of problems in basic life. For example she had a lot of trouble buying food as she couldn't read or speak so she couldn't ask for assistance. Public transport was difficult for my mother to use and so she was at a disadvantage. My father refused to learn English so was at a disadvantage in job prospects. He was a trained carpenter and truck driver in Spain but wasn't hired here for those particular jobs because he couldn't speak the language. As a result he has another tedious job that makes him miserable.

It is difficult for my sister and myself to go out because my parents are still living like it was in Spain twenty years ago. They don't realise times are changing and they are still very old fashioned. In a way I have benefited from this as I have been paying more attention to my studies. My parents compare us to themselves. My mother had her first boy friend when she was 20 years old and got married at 22.

I find my parents are very proud and at first were humiliated by being called wogs etc.

I'm very proud of them and I admire their courage to come to a country totally unknown to them to start a new life with two small children (my brothers). My parents always say how glad they are that they came to Australia. The life here is much better than they could've ever had in Spain but at first my parents, especially my mother, were reluctant to come as they were very frightened.

I find that knowing Spanish is a great advantage. I went to Spanish school for 6½ years, hating every minute of it. But now I realise how lucky I was that my parents pushed me into going because now I speak and I read the language and know a bit about the country and its history. It is a great advantage for job prospects and even in life in general because you never know when you'll need it.

My parents insist that we have an education and go to university. They always say that there is a time and place for marriage and children. But once we have children they would like us to generate all our thoughts and energies towards them and forget our careers until the children are grown up. I disagree on this aspect because I would like to continue with my career while I'm having children, before and after. Having children shouldn't have to tie you down to your house. If all I wanted to do in life was to get married and have children I wouldn't bother going to school because you don't need an education to breed. I'm going to work really hard and want to achieve a goal in life so I don't think how my parents will react because life isn't just to have babies. My parents are really supportive and caring and I know all their views are for my best.⁵⁰

There were several Macedonian girls in the group interviewed. One said:

We came to Australia over eleven years ago and have come quite a long way. We have our own house and this in a quiet neighbourhood. I get on well with my mother except when it comes to the subject of boys. My mother will not allow me to have a boy friend until I'm old enough, which will mean about 18. It's funny in a way, because she got married at 16. This confuses me very much.

If I want to go out I have practically to beg. Sometimes I even have to lie to my parents to be able to go to a party, saying I'm sleeping over at my friend's place. I absolutely hate doing this though. Lying that is, I feel so guilty afterwards. I must admit though that lately my parents have been great to me. They have been very understanding and have let me go out. Maybe it's because they've realised that I need some freedom. For this reason I think I could build up enough courage to tell them that I do have a boy friend.

It's funny in a way because if we were still living in Yugoslavia I could have been married by now. Maybe because my mother thinks I'm marrying my own kind. I really can't say.

My mother wishes me to have a good education. She's not exactly pushing me but she always points out the fact that what I learn is for my benefit, no one else's. This encourages me quite a bit. I intend going to University or a teachers' college to become a science teacher. This isn't certain though, I might change my mind, again. Both my parents work at the

Another Macedonian girl said:

I found my parents to be strict. They've told me that I couldn't go out so much. They let me go to school things, like socials, excursions, but not to a lot of parties. I found this to be a real hassle because most of my friends are allowed to go. Sometimes I think I'll lose my friends because they'll just forget about me and I'll be known as a nobody. I know my parents think that this is for my own good, but they don't realise that there's more to life than study and work. Being the eldest isn't bad, I think, even though I keep on getting reminded to do well in school. Not that I hate school, I realise my parents just want me to have a great future. I'm glad my parents aren't the types who can't wait to get me married off to someone at 16 or 17.

I keep on telling Dad that I'm mature enough to know what's right and wrong but he just thinks I'm still a baby. Because I know he thinks of me as a child, I can't communicate too well with him. What bugs me about my parents' attitude is that they say I'm old enough to clean the house, cook etc., but I'm not old enough to go out and have a good time with my friends. "Boys" is another subject that's on the dark side of my parents' brains. They just don't trust me with them. I don't think this is fair, how do they expect to settle down if they're always like this. They'll probably loosen up once I get older (I hope) but for now having a boy friend is just out of the question. I love my parents, but sometimes I just don't know them, and this gets me down and really angry, causing millions of arguments. They'll probably see the limelight one of these days, and become part of it too.⁵²

A girl with Italian parents thought they were 'old-fashioned'

I was born in 1988. My parents come from Italy, which doesn't bother me. There are four people in my family and I'm the youngest. I have an older sister and all our family are Catholics, although we don't attend Mass often. My parents allow me to go out with my friends every once in a while. At home we usually speak English. My sister and I talk English and I also talk to my parents in English, but they sometimes answer in Italian. I was born in Australia and consider myself Australian. We usually discuss problems and everyday things together. My mother and father both have equal roles in our family. My father is not the type of person to say, "I'm boss, I make the decisions".

Living in Australia with an Italian background makes no difference to me. It comes as an advantage sometimes, as I can speak a second language. There are so many other girls who come from different countries. In fact most of my friends are Yugoslav. My parents still have old-fashioned attitudes. I know that they would like me to marry some day, but they don't rush me into it. I know a lot of girls, some Macedonian, Lebanese or Portuguese that find it very important to get married before a certain age. If I were to get married, I know my parents would prefer it to a man with an Italian background also. I can understand this but I think they should understand that since I was brought up in this multi-cultural society that they can't really expect the chances of him being Italian.⁵³

Another of those interviewed had an Australian father and a Scottish mother.

I can speak more freely with my mother and be truthful towards her. I am able to discuss my ambitions and ideas with her. I can talk about boys who I like with her and I let her give her opinion and advice.

My father, however, is more withdrawn and it is more difficult to discuss matters with him concerning boys and my social life. Other matters come quite freely. I feel that this problem is caused by my age. Although I can talk better with my mother, they both look on me through my age, whether I have to wait till I'm older or I am just too young. It's hard to say that I feel I am old enough, and we must move with the times.⁵⁴

One of the girls in the group had an Australian mother and a Maltese father.

I was born in the year '68. My Mum comes from Australia and my Dad comes from Malta. There are six people in the family, four boys, two girls. First there's my sister, then two brothers, then me, then two younger brothers. My family is Catholic. My Dad is very religious. My Dad seems to think that if you don't go to church you're not much good. He makes my two younger brothers go to church. I personally don't like to go to church. That is usually a big problem at our house every Sunday. My parents let me have a boy friend and I'm allowed out but not a lot. I go down to the shops a lot but my parents call that going out, but I don't think it is. My parents are old-fashioned but not a lot.⁵⁵

It is apparent that the way girls aged fifteen, of non-Australian-born parents, feel about going to church, their position in the family, the way they are treated in comparison with their brothers and their rights in regard to going out with boys, is much the same as with the daughters of Australian and British-born parents. There is a difference in the case of some ethnic groups in regard to marriage of girls; where parents have come from country areas in Yugoslavia, Greece and southern Italy the tradition is often maintained of early marriage for daughters. This tradition could well be weakened where girls are encouraged by their parents to stay at school. Some girls of European parents revealed their own determination to defer marriage until they had received sufficient education to enter a skilled occupation. Parental anxiety to safeguard their daughters is a long-held tradition in Australia, and one that is less likely to change in the present social environment. The other tradition, of exempting boys from household chores while expecting girls to participate, is gradually being broken down in some schools, some Australian and some non-Australian homes in Illawarra, at elsewhere.

Year 12 boys and girls at Warrawong High School have the opportunity to attend a three day study course at a centre near Robertson, requiring parental permission to sleep away from home for two nights. Only two students, one boy and one girl, of the forty-eight Year 12 students in 1983 were not allowed by their parents to attend. There was equal participation in all the chores associated with food preparation and cleaning. In the years since the school has been using the Elmwood study centre, successive Year 12 girls have gained confidence in expressing their views in regard to their role and status.

The same growth in self-confidence has been seen in the Year 10 girls, some of whom produce 'Students' Voice', a school magazine. Their ideas can be seen in the following article, headed INTER-VIEWS:

In our last edition of "Students Voice" we discovered that there were no girls doing Industrial Arts, but we did find out that a number of guys do Home Science. We interviewed a number of guys but, for some reasons unknown to us, they wish to remain anonymous.

We asked them firstly why they elected to do Home Science. Their answers varied from, "Something to do", "You can't eat wood or metal doing Technics, but you can eat food doing cooking", "Just felt like it", and "Because I like to eat".

We then asked them if they thought it was worthwhile and they all agreed that it was because if you move out on your own you won't starve. Most admitted being teased a bit by their friends but it was the same friends which asked them for some food.

We also questioned them about their parents attitudes and again the responses varied from, "Nothing", "They wanted me to make my own choice", "My Mum said sure, go ahead then you can give me a break".

When questioned about their future prospects, some boys said that they only did cooking to learn how to survive on their own and others said that it was a good career option.

Male chefs, we found, are employed in interesting areas such as - Ocean liners, the Navy, hospitals, restaurants, and even private homes!

So it seems that Home Science isn't just a feminine domain but can be very useful for boys too. So come on guys, pick it next year and if your friends tease you just remind them that it is the "Twentieth Century".

TRAINING THE YOUNG

Adult supervision over the young whilst at school was echoed also in the concern for their careers once they left. In the early post-war years, headmasters and headmistresses often complained that full employment and high wages were inducing many to leave school too early. In 1948, the headmaster of the Junior Technical School pointed out the dangers of boys leaving school early to enter 'dead end jobs'. Of the 221 boys leaving his school in 1947, 32 per cent had gone into unskilled occupations, 25 per cent into semi-skilled trades and only 17 per cent into skilled trades. Of the rest, 16 per cent became shop assistants, 4 per cent took clerical jobs and 2 per cent went on to the land. There was a growing tendency also for boys to take up unskilled occupations in a period of labour shortage. The headmistress of Wollongong Domestic Science was also concerned that only 14 per cent of girls in her school completed the Intermediate Certificate, 'a lower percentage than I have met elsewhere'.⁵⁶

The establishment of comprehensive high schools and the introduction of the Wyndham scheme in the 1980s did establish a more universal four year period of high school education. Yet there remained vast disparities in how long children from different backgrounds stayed at school. Research in the early 1970s suggested that not surprisingly students who attended the then still selective high school, Wollongong High, or those from the more affluent and non-migrant areas such as Figtree tended to remain longer at school than those in more recently established areas such as Oak Flats, Warilla and Lake

Illawarra, where there was a high migrant population. Throughout the 1970s, pupils tended to remain longer at school, almost three-quarters in the Illawarra area now staying on to complete the School Certificate. By the late 1970s, there had been also a shift towards completing the Higher School Certificate, the only exceptions being Berkeley High, in an area of British migration, and Bulli High with its high proportion of Australian-born. In both these areas, the proportion staying to complete Year 12 actually fell from 1970 to 1978. In contrast to the population in Berkeley and the Bulli area, most migrants of non English speaking background do seem to place a high premium on education for their children.⁶⁷

Retention Rates for Year 12
at State High Schools in the Wollongong area, %

| School | 1970 | 1977 | 1978 |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Dak Flats | 16.53 | 19.40 | 24.27 |
| Wentworth | 16.15 | 23.14 | 19.34 |
| Lake Illawarra | — | 16.67 | 16.64 |
| Dapto | 19.45 | 26.20 | 21.32 |
| Berkeley | 16.13 | 16.21 | 12.78 |
| Warrawong | — | 21.78 | 18.08 |
| Port Kembla | 18.52 | 26.41 | 26.09 |
| Fingtree | — | 27.30 | 33.77 |
| Wollongong High | 80.41 | 80.41 | 83.11 |
| Smiths Hill | 16.67 | 23.67 | 29.06 |
| Kirra Boys | 28.31 | 22.53 | 26.04 |
| Commalla | 18.67 | 23.88 | 28.50 |
| Woonona | 19.44 | 18.08 | 22.45 |
| Bulli | 25.44 | 15.24 | 19.90 |

Source: P.R. De Lacey and A. Barlow, *Coordination at Illawarra High Schools*, Department of Education, University of Wollongong, 1978, p. 18.

Higher retention was stimulated in the 1980s by severe unemployment in the steel region and by more imaginative planning on the part of education authorities. Attempts to give students work experience while still at school, to help in the transition to the world of work, were augmented by a much more ambitious plan: a Participation and Equity Programme announced by the Commonwealth Minister for Education and Youth Affairs in 1983. This aimed to provide a range of options in education training, employment and community activities for the 15 to 24 year old group. Its intention was particularly to help those who were disadvantaged, whether still at school or out of school. Two schools in Illawarra which pioneered an alternative curriculum to encourage students to stay at school after the legal leaving age were those with the greatest proportion of migrants' children, Port Kembla and Warrawong High Schools. These schools were actually already working out alternative programmes before the Participation and Equity plan was announced. At Port Kembla 36 of the 46 Year 11 students began the new course in 1983; the school co-operated with the Wollongong College for Technical and Further Education and in the alternative curriculum students all studied one of the five T.A.F.E. courses available. At Warrawong High School 20 students studied English, basic mathematics and science, as well as 'living

skill' subjects; a group of 16 and 17-year old boys and girls enthusiastically restored an old tram under the supervision of the Principal; others learned the art of photography through to producing the finished article. These students would not be undertaking the Higher School Certificate but would instead receive a school certificate of attainment.

While these two schools had led the way in school-developed programmes, the theoretical approach to greater retention and equity had been outlined in a paper, 'Future Directions of Secondary Education in New South Wales', published jointly by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong and the Director-General of the Education Department in New South Wales. The co-operation of University and Department of Education, of T.A.F.E. and the secondary schools was also paralleled by the two high schools' efforts in seeking the co-operation of the community.⁵⁸ Warrawong High had a committee in which teachers, parents and community representatives combined to monitor the progress of the course. Students were encouraged to express their views, as is obvious by the accounts of their experiences in 'Students' Voice', their journal.

Close connection with community organisations has become a feature of schools in the neighbourhood around Lake Illawarra. Warilla High is another school with a large proportion of students with a non-English speaking background as well as a number of aboriginal students. The school journal *Bamack* carries messages of goodwill and/or advertisements from the Shellharbour Municipal Council and local businesses which have contributed to the school. The district newspaper *Lake Times* and the *Advertiser* regularly report the school activities, including the work of the students in community projects. Warilla High is one of the schools which, like Warrawong High, uses Elmwood for study camps; Years 11 and 12 have the experience of school work and co-operative living away from home for several days. With their trimboli work programmes, this is preparation for life and work at the end of their school years.

LEISURE

For children born at the end of the war, leisure time in the Illawarra was spent in much the same way as by their parents before the war. The bush was still close enough for walks, tree climbing and cubby-house building after school. There was the beach, always a good place to play when the weather was fine. At home there was the radio, with children's sessions and serials. On Saturday afternoons the weekly treat was 'going to the pictures' at the nearest cinema, with threepence to spend on an ice cream. There was still the Sunday ritual of getting clean and well dressed and going to church with the rest of the family. Often on a Sunday afternoon there would be a walk around the neighbourhood. Some parents encouraged their children to join the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides. The Chief Empire Scout, Lord Rowallan, visited Wollongong in 1948 and was greeted by 1200 scouts, guides and brownies. By 1955 there were 1037 wolf cubs in 48 packs, 883 scouts in 51 troops; rover scouts and seniors helping in the movement brought the total to 2147, twice the numbers of ten years earlier, as the South Coast Scouting Report of June of that year showed.

Concern for the morals of the young, especially boys, was expressed in the establishing of Police Boys' Clubs in New South Wales. One opened in Wollongong in August 1952 and soon had a membership of 4000, with an average weekly attendance of 900, according to reports in the *South Coast Times*. In 1969 another club was opened at Bulli with 2000 members. Wollongong still had 2300 members with a daily attendance of 80. Membership required the signing of a declaration promising observance of a code of clean and orderly living, respect for authority, friendship with fellow members and policemen, and

loyalty to king and country. So the police boys' clubs were akin to the scout movement.

The churches too made greater efforts to attract the young, with Fellowship Clubs, tennis and socials. But from 1946 and right through the 1950s there was a publicly expressed anxiety about 'rough and unruly behaviour', especially amongst teenage boys. There were allegations of "pancane raids on school trains", misuse of slot machines in "such quiet resorts as Austinmer" and fears of rising crime rates amongst juveniles. The *South Coast Times* reported that "one of the largest meetings ever held in Wollongong" was convened in July 1957 to consider the problems of juvenile delinquency.

The Illawarra region was suffering from the pangs of growth; the baby boom of the war years, the increasing number of workers and their families attracted to the area from other parts of the state, as well as the continuous migrant intake from outside Australia, all created a much larger youth population than the community had ever known. The fifties saw the beginning of the building of new high schools, with trains and buses crowded with home-going students. Apart from the scout movement, police boys' clubs and church efforts to involve the youth in leisure activity, there was little else of an organised nature to entertain them outside the home. With the expansion of suburban housing into the countryside, the bush began to disappear. In new suburbs such as Berkeley, young adolescents often roamed the streets with little to do. Tony Conlon recalled that a scoutmaster put on some dances to relieve the boredom. Tony belonged to the scouts and also a Church Fellowship at Corrimal, a long way to go 'to meet girls'. Soccer took up a lot of his time in the winter. He and his friends were overjoyed when his father bought a truck and in the summer took them back and forth to the beach.

For those from non-English speaking backgrounds there was not much relevance in the scout and police boys' ideology. They often preferred to attend the activities their own communities organised. By the mid 1960s tensions between the Australian and migrant youths and between different ethnic groups often caused fights at 'mixed dances', so girls like Adrienne Luceto found it much safer and more pleasant to keep with their own families and own nationalities. The high schools in the late fifties began to contribute to social life, the school dances being well patronised and supervised by staff members, but such dances were not very frequent. Where young people had suitable homes and where the parents agreed, there were parties where the young danced to the music of gramophone records. The dancing of the 1960s was not the 'old time' of school functions, it was the new energetic dancing symbolising the coming of the 'youth revolution' and of vast changes in life styles in the whole Australian community.

One of the most significant of the new things in post-war life was television, appearing first in Australia in 1956 and spreading quickly over the whole continent. By 1965 most homes in Illawarra were displaying television antennae and the entertainment provided by black and white T.V. was the most popular in the majority of families. The cinema had spread the mass culture of America slowly and surely, the effects of television were to speed the process, particularly for young people. Jeans and T-shirts became the universal dress for both sexes. 'Beatlemania' spread simultaneously from Britain to America and Australia; those who could enjoy the mass euphoria of attending the huge concerts of pop singers and bands did so; but everybody could see them by watching at home. Television was a strong influence in keeping the family together in leisure time.

The home itself became an attractive place in other ways. While jobs were plentiful and more than one income was available in many families, full advantage could be taken of the availability of the labour saving and comfort devices; refrigerators, hot water systems, washing machines and many other electrical

gadgets enabled women to maintain the household in the state of comfort and cleanliness to which families were accustomed, while being paid for work outside the home. The house itself could be paid for in a much shorter time, and then improved and added to. Hire purchase finance was plentiful; young people could get cars as soon as they were earning, many young couples could go into their own home as soon as they married, with their own car and furniture and their own television set.

Television was part of, and one of the agents of, the new life style, a sign of prosperity and a guide to new fashions in food, clothing, hair style, music and dance. It also provided the latest news of events not only in Australia but also in every part of the world; the sight and sound of people in far-off places came right into the viewers' homes. In the late 1960s young people who might not have bothered to read newspapers knew as much about the war in Vietnam as their parents or any other adults. As elsewhere, Illawarra heard and took part in the debate about the rights and wrongs of Australia's involvement, of the demonstrations against the war and conscription. There were other controversial matters, like conservation and women's rights, emerging by the end of the sixties; in the seventies politics and parties jostled with a host of 'liberation' matters. So young people heard, and listened in varying degrees to matters which in pre-T.V. times they would not have bothered about. Encouraged by service clubs like Lions, Rotary and Jaycees, young people joined in debates and public speaking competitions, often surprising their elders by the ability to articulate their ideas on a wide range of controversial political and social matters.

Children born in the 1960s had the paradoxical experience of growing up in comfort, then not being able to become independent through earning money for themselves. At first their parents were able and willing to help cushion the effects of unemployment on their school-leaving children. Unemployment in the 1980s was much worse; Illawarra's dependence on the steel and coal industries meant that many adults lost what had seemed to be permanent jobs and joined the young in a frustrating search for work. Leisure, for large numbers, was enforced idleness, something to be dreaded.

Many Illawarra men and women have painful memories of the depression of the 1930s. Fifty years later they can discern differences: the new technology is changing the pattern of work and livelihood opportunity; the need for human labour is decreasing. But whereas in the earlier depression the federal government washed its hands of the problem and state governments merely provided belated 'sustenance' money, the 1980s have seen a different approach. In addition to unemployment payments, the Commonwealth provides funding for community employment programmes and youth support schemes.

For adults who have not had easy access to education in the past, the state government provides help through Outreach, part of Technical and Further Education; many Illawarra unemployed people, as well as aborigines, migrant women and others in disadvantaged groups are now acquiring new skills in pleasant company.

Illawarra's local government plays an integral part in the organising of federal and state funded community plans. Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama councils all celebrated 125 years of local government in 1984. Their response to community problems and their experiences in helping solve those problems are very different from what they were fifty years ago. The more open methods of government and the consultation with the community on all important matters are also in marked contrast to the lack of democracy in the infant days of local government.

The Illawarra community too has been growing, not only in size but also in maturity. A manifestation of this maturity has been the lack of any obvious hostility to newcomers from Asia. An increased number of Asian students at the University of Wollongong has been accepted without the adverse comment shown by a minority in other universities. Indo-Chinese families have been absorbed into Illawarra without any of the antipathy one might expect from workers in times of economic difficulty. Their numbers have not been large. While New South Wales took 38.6 percent of all the migrants from Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam arriving in Australia between 1975 and 1983, the highest number was 5872, in the 1979-80 year, and Illawarra was only one of the state's regions chosen for residence. Vietnamese constituted four-fifths of the Indo-Chinese migrants and in 1981 their children numbered 1.5 percent of children born in Illawarra to overseas-born parents, while the children of Yugoslav-born parents numbered 12.3 per cent, and of U.K. and Irish 43.4 percent of the total. The section of Indo-Chinese classed as 'dependants' always outnumbered those seeking employment, the majority of whom were 'unskilled'. In addition, over one-third of those arriving were under the age of 15. So the threat to other workers has not been great. It should also be recognised that there has been a growth of maturity amongst Illawarra trade unionists, their leadership consciously making efforts against racism.⁵⁹

Another sign of Illawarra's growing maturity is the intense regard for the environment. In its widest sense this is shown in the welcome sign erected at the Lawrence Hargrave lookout: "Wollongong City of Peace". It is shown too in everyday matters: there is little dumping of rubbish except at the places provided. There is earnest discussion about tree lopping or removal, a greater awareness throughout the community of the need to retain rather than destroy our heritage, to ensure that while Illawarra is developed it remains the garden of New South Wales.

ABBREVIATIONS IN ENO NOTES

| | |
|--------|---|
| ADB | Australian Dictionary of Biography |
| AONSW | Archives of New South Wales |
| HRA | Historical Records of Australia |
| IM | Illawarra Mercury |
| JLCNSW | Journal of the Legislative Council of New South Wales |
| KI | Kiama Independent |
| RAHS | Royal Australian Historical Society |
| SCT | South Coast Times |
| WCL | Wollongong City Library |
| WUA | Wollongong University Archives |

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21. Personal details come from Ken Auburn interviewed by Narelle Crux, 13 July 1982 and Joan Auburn interviewed by Narelle Crux, 12 July 1982
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23. Personal details come from the McGoldrick interview, Coltman interview, David interview and James interview
24. Personal details come from the McGoldrick interview and Coleman interview and the quotes are from the Hepgood interview and the Rees interview
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34. Coltman interview

35. Waldron interview

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INDEX

A

Aborigines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 22, 30, 55, 131
Adult Migrant Education Service 103
Agricultural Shows 21, 28, 88
Albion Park 65
Allen, A. 13
Allan, D. 3, 4, 13
Alouria 2
American Creek 68
Angel's Bridge 19
Anglican Church (See Church of England)
Anzac Day 80, 88, 111
Arkell, F. 107
Auburn, J. & K. 71, 73
Austinmer 20, 46, 65, 87, 129
Australia Day 86
Australian Agricultural Co. 13, 17
Australian Fertilisers 87
Australian Iron and Steel 67, 70, 71, 84, 98, 101, 103, 131

B

Baker, Rev. H. 35
Band of Hope 28, 55
Baptist Church 18, 35
Berry, Z. 35
Bass, G. 2, 16
Battery Park 78
Bellambi 2, 18, 19, 42, 67, 118
Belmore Basin 8, 64, 66, 67
Berkeley 13, 15, 20, 88, 106, 107, 108, 111, 128
Berry, J. 18
Birthrate decline 67
Blackburne 51
Black Harry 5
Blacklegs 42, 55, 58, 66
Board of National Education 20, 33
Bourke, Governor R.G. 6, 7, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, 33, 65
Box, H. 99, 108
Boy Scouts 92, 93, 117, 129
Bright, A. 68, 70, 73, 91, 94, 97
Brisbane, Governor T. 4, 13
Brooks, Captain 5, 6
Brooks, R. 13
Brown, G. 20

Browne, W. 6
Broughton, Bishop W.G. 18, 33
Brooks, Captain 6
Bulli/Woonona 3, 4, 8, 15, 17, 18, 20, 42-63, 65, 67, 68, 83, 89, 92, 104, 111, 128
Bulli Coal Mining Co. 45, 47, 52, 57, 58
Bulli North 20, 46, 47

C

Camden 38, 39, 39
Campbell, T. 5
Catholic Church and Schools 18, 19, 20, 23, 33, 34, 35, 37, 43, 46, 47, 50, 55, 88, 89, 90, 100, 102, 110, 111, 121
Carruthers, J.E. 26, 37
Ceder 3, 22
Census
- 1883 6
- 1841 13
- 1861 23, 42, 64
- 1871 28, 39, 39, 84
- 1881 28, 39, 42, 56, 64
- 1891 40, 42, 64
- 1901 40, 42, 83
Chapman, G. 34, 35
Charcoal Creek 19
Charles, S. 33
Charlotte Street 68
Chisholm, C. 14
Church of England 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 43, 44, 46
Cinema 94, 129
Citizens' Association 85, 87
'City of Peace' 132
Clark, Mr. 2, 3, 16
Clifton 20, 65, 87
Coal and Coal Miners 13, 18, 17, 18, 21, 26, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 50, 53, 55, 58, 64, 66, 87, 72
Coalcliff 16, 57, 67
Coke Works 66, 68
Commonwealth Rolling Mills 96
Coledale 68, 106
Coltman, R. 68, 72, 85, 90, 93, 97
Conlon, T. 106, 108, 109, 130
Connell, H. 22, 23
Congregational Church 33
Conscription 86
Convicts 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 15, 17
Cook, Captain 1, 2, 22
Cooperative Society 65

Commal 106, 111, 128
Cnngila 100, 107, 110
Crown Street 18, 69, 66, 78, 114
Council Chambers 18, 18, 68
Council of Education 36, 47
Cullen, Sir. W. 37

D

Dept 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 76, 87, 111, 128

Dept Smelting Works 66, 67, 77

Darling, Governor R. 4, 13

David, H. 71, 72, 91, 87

Dawson, C. 98

Danominational School Board 20, 27

Department of Public Instruction 37, 40

1840s 20

1890s 66

Depression (1830s) 67, 69, 104

Dharawal language 1

Disadvantaged 131

Disaster

- Bulli Mine 42, 43, 49, 55, 58, 59, 80, 81, 82, 83

- Mt. Kembla Mine 66

Displaced Persons 98

District Council 15

Domestic Science School 76

Dwyer, W. 85

E

Education Act

- 1880 37, 54

- 1916 74

Elections, Legislative Assembly 16

Electrolytic Smelting & Refining Co. 67, 71, 74, 75, 82, 92, 97

Electricity 71, 72

Elmwood Study Centre 126

Empire Day 86, 111

Employment, Women's 101

Endeavour (ship) 1

F

Fairy Meadow 20, 89, 104

Federated Ironworkers' Association 103

Figtree 112, 118, 128

Five Islands 42

Flinders, M. 2

Flinders Street Camp 68
Food Prices 48
Fraternity Club 100
Free Church 27
Free Selection 16, 23
Fuller, G. 37

G

Garrett, J. 15
Gas 68
Gerard, G. 15
Gerringong 22, 24, 28, 35, 39
Gipps, Governor Sir G. 17, 18
Girl Guides 93, 128
Gold 15, 16
Good Neighbour Council 99
Gray, J. 6, 15, 33
Gray, W. 5
Greenwood, J. 35
Gray, G. 23
Grey, J.M. 22, 23

H

Hanrahan, J. 33
Hapgood, W. 68, 72
'Happy Valley' (Commail) 105
Harrigan's Bicycle Shop 66
Harrigan, D. 70, 91
Helensburg 67
Hindmarsh, M. 5
Home Tutor Service 103
Hopkins, A.S. 82
Hopkins (A.I.S.) 67
Hostels
- Karingal 89
- Commonwealth 99, 107
Housing 46, 56, 70, 71, 104, 105, 106
Hunter, Governor 18
Hunter River 3, 3
Hutler, J. 33, 34
Hyam, M. 5

I

Illawarra House Academy 33
Illawarra Mercury 18
Illawarra Miners' Protective Association 67

Illawarra Mutual Building Society 46, 64, 66
Illawarra Shorthorn 31
Illawarra Steamship Navigation Co. 23
Immigrants 23, 24, 42, 43, 67, 68, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, girls 121-127

J

Jackson, C.F.T. 92, 93
Jamberoo 4, 8, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 35, 38, 39
James, E. 68, 69, 72, 96
Jenkins, R. 13
Jenkins, W. 15
Jerrara 20
Jervis Bay 22
Johnson, G. 13
Junior Technical School 78

K

Kanahooka 112
Kangaroo Valley 6
Karingal Hostel 99
Keira Boys High School 128
Kelly, J.J. 100
Kembla Street 19, 65
Kerosene Shale Works 66
Klame 4, 18, 20, 21, 22 ff., 42, 65, 66, 76, 82, 87, 131
 - blowhole 2, 6, 81
 - 'ghost' 36
King, K. 82
Kinross, J. 27
Koonawarra 13

L

Lake Illawarra 2, 66, 67, 90, 108, 112, 121, 128
Lang, J.D. 6, 13, 14, 18, 19
Language Classes
 - English 88, 100, 121
 - 'Ethnic' 121, 122
Laz, H.R. 75
Leeks, N. 103
Literacy 21
Lithgow 67, 70
Local Government 131
Lockout (mining) 1879 57
Luonto, A. 107, 108, 110, 130
Lysegh, E. 19
Lyseghs J. Ltd. 113

M

McAlear, P. 106, 108, 109
McDonald, D. 33
Macquarie, Governor L. 3, 4, 13
McGoldrick, M. 68, 69, 72, 73, 90, 91, 97
Maitland (ship) 8
Mannix, S. 105, 109, 111
Market Square 86
Maritime Strike, 1890 86
Marrs, P. 5
Marshall Mount 6, 15, 20, 22, 67, 111
Meares, Rev. D. 19
Menzies, Dr. 33
Metal Manufactures Ltd. 67, 68
Methodist Church 18, 19, 20, 27, 43, 54, 55, 65, 68, 91
Methodists, Primitive 54, 55
Migrant Resources Centre 103
Miller, R. 30
Milton 69
Minnamurra 29
Mitchell, Sir T. 7
Monitor (paper) 5
Mt. Keira 17, 20, 57, 65, 66, 67, 95
Mt. Keira Scout Camp 92
Mt. Kembla 20, 66, 87, 68, 111
Mt. Kembla Coal Co. 74
Mt. Pleasant 57, 66, 67, 68

N

National School 18, 19, 32, 34
Naturalisation 100, 118
New Australians' 98
Newcastle 42, 104
New Education 74
New Deal for Education 110
Newing, J. 25
New Settlers' League 99, 108
Nowra 15
North Illawarra Council 95
Nude Bathing 85

O

Oak Flats 112
O'Brien, C. 17
Omega 20, 22, 23
'Orange' Waring 41

Ottford 80
Osborne, Henry 6, 16, 18, 22, 23, 25
Osborne, J. 18
Osborne, W. 68
Otton, P. 6
Outreach 131

P

Parents and Citizens Association 100
Parker, H. 36, 68
Parkinson's Cordial Factory 66, 65
Participation and Equity Programme 128
Police Boys' Clubs 129, 130
Population
- Bulli Woonona 68
- Illawarra 15, 21, 67
- Kiama 21
- Wollongong 64, 67
- Wollongong Municipality 98
Port Kembla 67, 69, 70, 74, 78, 79, 80, 82, 94, 96, 98, 107, 108, 110, 112, 113, 121, 126
Port Kembla Progress Association 75
Poshton, J. 33
Power Station, Port Kembla 71
Presbyterian Church 18, 19, 20, 23, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34, 37, 43, 46, 91
Primbee 100
Public School League 36, 38

Q

Quarrying 39
Queen Gooseberry 22

R

Racism 101, 102, 122 ff.
Radio 72
Railways 39, 84, 68, 86
Red Point 2, 13
Rees, A. 68, 70, 72, 93, 97
Returned Soldiers' Labour Club 89
Rigney, J. Father 19
Riversdale 23, 33
Robb, C. 33
Roman Catholic (See Catholic)
Rosabank Academy 33, 34
Ross, A. 47, 53, 62, 64, 65, 67
Ruperto, J. 107, 109, 110
Russelvale 71

S

Salty Creek 74
Salvation Army 109
Scarborough 87
Schools
 · Early 18, 19, 20
 · Kiama 27, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40
 · Bulli 46, 47, 48, 53, 54
 · Port Kembla 74, 100
 · Clifton 87
 · Secondary 33, 36, 37, 40, 111, 112, 121
 · Wollongong Public 65, 76, 85, 87
 · Wollongong High 88, 89, 90, 96, 97
Schools, Post-Second World War 109, 110, 128
School Enrolments 1915-45 78
School Retention Rates 127, 128
School of Arts, Bulli-Woomona 53
Scouting (See Boy Scouts)
Seamen's Union 67
Sex Discrimination 122, 123, 124, 125
Shacks, Coledale 68
Shall harbour 14, 16, 20, 65, 66, 67, 76, 82, 131
Shoalhaven 2, 3, 8, 15, 16, 20, 22, 32, 117
Sheobert, J. 17, 18
Smith, C Throsby 8, 15, 18
Smith, J. 33
Smith S.H. 16
Smith Street 14, 19, 65
Smiths Hill 87, 128
Somerville, G. 54
Somerville, W. 47, 54
Sophie Jane (ship) 8
South Bulli Coal Co. 71
South Coast Labour Council 103
Spearing, J. 7
St Augustine's Church Records 43, 44, 45
Station Street 68
Stanwell Park 8, 15, 21, 66, 83
Steelworks (See also Hoskins and A.I.B.)
Stewart, A. 4
Stewart, J. 36, 38, 37
Stoney Creek 20
Stuart Park 81, 91, 96
Students' Voice 126, 127
Strikes 48, 57, 58, 66, 117 (girls, Port Kembla High School)
Sunday Sport 91

Sunday Schools 27, 91
Superior Public School 78
Surf Clubs 94, 95
Swindell, Miss 40
Sydney C. of E. Grammer School 40
Sydney Cove (ship) 2, 16

T

TAFE (Technical and Further Education) 128, 129, 131
Tart, Rev. J. 19
Television 130, 131
Temperance 28, 33, 40, 55
Terralong Street 29, 31
The Illawarra Grammer School 121
Thinroul 66, 94
Throsby, C. 3, 13, 14, 42
Todd, Mr. 63
Tom Thumb (boat) 2
- (lagoon) 3, 4, 95
Town Hall 65
Towns, Captain R. 14
Towradgi Creek 8, 95
Towradgi Intensive Language Centre 120
Trade Unions 66, 67, 102, 103, 110
Turramurra tribe 1

U

Ukrainian Orthodox 116
Unanderra 19, 67
Unemployment, 1980s 131
Unionism (mining) 57
Uniting Church 19
University of Wollongong 7, 102, 115, 122, 124, 129, 132
Centre for Multicultural Studies 103

V

Vice-Chancellor 129
Victims, Mining Disaster 69-83
Volunteer Rifle Corps 35

W

Waldron, W. 68, 69, 86, 91, 94, 95, 97
Wandewensis tribe 1
Warrabah (shipwreck) 55
Warilla 112, 128, 129
Warrawong 110, 112, 119, 122-128

Waterfall 67
Waters and Sons 65
Waterside Workers' Federation 102
Wattamolla 2
Wentworth, D 13
Wentworth, W. C. 13
Wesleyans (See also Methodist Church) 28, 28, 34, 37, 46, 47, 48, 54
Westmacott, Captain R. 9, 17
Wingecarribee 23
Wodi Wodi tribe 1
Wollongong 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 42, 53, 64-67, 70, 71, 74, 81, 82, 104-131
Wollongong North 68
Wollongong West 76
Wombeyan 106
Women Migrants 101-109
 In Mining Community 43-46, 48, 55, 56, 58-63, 66
Wongawilli 67, 68
Wyndham Scheme 127
Wynn, W. 55, 56, 57, 58

Y

Yellah 87
Young Men's Christian Association 56
Young Men's Improvement Society 33, 56

Z

Zweep, S. 105, 106, 109, 111

